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THE LIFE OF THE HEART.

BY LOTTIE LAUREL.

Though looks may change, and haggard be
The face that once was fair;
Still lives the heart, the loving heart—
Though overwhelmed with care.

Ah! though its throbs may heavy be
Weighed down by grief and woe,
Yet still the brilliant light of love
Through life will ever glow.

Yes, close within each secret cell
Some dear loved image still,
In vivid colors stamped remains,
Resist it as it will.

So do not wound the loving heart;
Let not the blighting sear
Of scorn and unrequited love
Mar all it holds most dear.

But by kind words and loving tones,
And actions warm and true;
Oh! let the loving, feeling heart,
Trusting, rely on you.

THE GUN MAKER OF MOSCOW;

OR,

VALDIMIR THE MONK.

A TALE OF THE EMPIRE UNDER PETER THE GREAT

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

[Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1856, by ROBERT BONNER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.]

CHAPTER XII.

A CONFERENCE, AND HOW IT WAS INTERRUPTED.

Rosalind Valdai and Zenobie were together in their sitting-room, and the former had been weeping. She looked paler than when we saw her before, and her brow was heavy. Smiles no longer crept about the dimples of her cheeks, and her eyes had a sad, mournful look. Her face plainly showed that she had suffered much.

"My dear mistress," urged the faithful Zenobie, throwing her arms about Rosalind's neck, and drawing her head upon her bosom, "weep no more. Oh! there must be some hope. Surely God will not suffer such an unholy work to be done."

"Ah, Zenobie," returned the fair maiden, in a fluttering, melancholy tone, "where can I look for hope?"

"I say, in God. You have told me we must look to Him, and I have believed you. Have you not always been good to God?"

"I have been as good as I knew how, though I have sinned."

"How sinned? Oh, my mistress, if you have sinned, then who is pure? Tell me."

"We all sin, Zenobie. It is our nature."

"So I have often heard, but I hardly think you have sinned. What have you done which you knew to be wrong?"

"Nothing—nothing."

"Then how have you sinned?"

"Ah, Zenobie, we all do things which we ought not to do; but yet I mean to do as near right as I can."

"Then leave the rest with God. Oh, when poor mortals do as near right as lies in their power, surely they may leave the rest with God without fear. And now if God is just, as you tell me, why should He allow the wicked Duke to triumph over you? What justice would there be in that—when you are all goodness, and he is sin itself?"

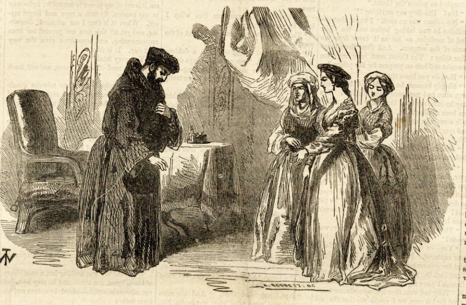
Rosalind was puzzled. She had tried to teach her attendant to love and honor God, and she had so far succeeded that Zenobie understood all the principles of Christianity, and embraced them gladly and joyfully; but now how should she make this point understood? How should she reconcile this apparent injustice with God's universal mercy and justice?

"Can you not tell me?" the young girl asked again. "Why should God allow such a thing? You say He is all-powerful, and can do what He wills."

"Zenobie," returned the maiden, after pondering for awhile, "you do not look at the subject in a proper light. God does not operate by petty, individual decisions, as an Emperor does. He sees that certain laws are necessary for the good of mankind—and not a single law of all His code is there but is very good. Last night your head ached, and you suffered; and of course you had violated some natural law. It was your own fault. And so this suffering which is now come upon me is the result of a violation of one of God's laws."

"Ah," cried Zenobie, eagerly, "but you are the one who *suffers*, while *another* violates the law. In my case I did both, and do not complain."

"But listen:" pursued Rosalind, with a brightening countenance, for the true idea had come to her mind. "It would not be just for a person to enjoy all the good of a law and leave others to suffer all the evil. God has established in us a social nature, and through that part of our nature come the sweetest of our earthly enjoyments. Such a law—the law of Sociality—must be universal, and if men break that law they must suffer, and the only just way in which God could shield me from suffering would be to release me from the effects of the law. Then I should be a poor, lonesome, outcast; forced to live all my days alone like a barren rock upon the top of some bleak mountain. But I would rather live among people, and enjoy the companionship of my fellows. I have freely accepted the boon, and now when its evils come I must suffer. Had God's intent been followed out there would have been no suffering. It is not His fault that the Duke sins. Do you understand me?"



THE BLACK MONK'S UNEXPECTED AND FORTUNATE ARRIVAL.

"I don't know," murmured the young girl, dubiously.

"But see," resumed Rosalind—"you choose to exercise your social nature, and of your own accord you mingle among your fellows. Do you not see that thus you are enjoying one of God's richest blessings—the blessing of Sociality, Friendship, and Love?"

"Yes—I see."

"Well—so far God is good in having given you that power for such enjoyment?"

"Yes—I see."

"Well—now under that law, when my father and mother died, I found a friend in the Duke, and here have found a home. But circumstances have changed. The Duke has become wicked in thought—he wants more money—and he will prostitute a power which, in obeyance of God's law would be good, to my ruin. Now God cannot save me without rending to pieces one of His most powerful laws, and one which is meant for a universal good. The moment He does that He destroys that principle of human dependence whence flow those most holy virtues of Love, Friendship, and Charity. He must act by *universal laws*, and not by partial rules and individual exceptions. So as long as I can enjoy the blessings of social life, I must be subject to the evils of treachery and social wickedness. Do you not understand now?"

"I see—I see," the girl murmured, thoughtfully.

"Aye, Zenobie," the mistress added, while a holy light shone upon her countenance, "God has made us subject to ills here; but look beyond the grave, and how bright it is with Hope! I have a father and a mother there. Oh! in all my misery—even in the worst state to which the bad Duke can reduce me, I would not change places with him. You seemed to intimate that God would see me suffer, and yet let the Duke triumph. *Triumph?* Oh, Zenobie, for what would you have that man's heart in your bosom, and his soul in your keeping?"

"I would rather die!" the girl cried, while a cold shudder ran through her frame.

"Then you see he does not go clear. Oh, how blind and simple are those who imagine there can be pleasure in sin!"

This opened a new theme to Zenobie's mind, and she pondered upon it a long while. But by and by she came back to the theme from whence they had started; and in pursuance thereof she said,—

"My mistress, are you sure the Duke will persist in this?"

"Aye, Zenobie; I know he will," Rosalind answered, while the old shudder came back to her frame, and the old grief to her soul.

"And have you no hope?"

"Only one—in Ruric. He may help me."

"Oh, I hope he can. He is a noble man."

Rosalind answered with a look of gratitude, and Zenobie proceeded,—

"Where is the titled lord more noble than he? Oh, were I to choose a husband now, and he was free, and I were in your position, I'd choose Ruric Nevel before all the emperors of earth."

"So would I," murmured the fair maiden.

"If I were a countess, as you are, oh, how I should love to make such a man a count."

"But my marrying him would not make him a count. Were he a count, and I like what he is now in station, his marrying me would give me the title; but we poor women do not have that power."

"Well—then we should so much the more have the right to choose our own husbands."

Rosalind made no verbal answer, but her look showed that she sympathised with the sentiment.

"My mistress," at length spoke Zenobie again, this time in a low whisper,—"why may we not leave this place?"

Rosalind started as though she had heard the speech of a spirit, and for a moment a look of hope gleamed upon her face; but it quickly passed away.

"Alas! where should we go!"

This was a part of the plan which Zenobie had not thought of; and ere she could make any reply one of the female domestics entered the apartment, and announced that a woman wished to see her young mistress. Rosalind asked who it was, but the girl could only tell her that it was a middle-aged woman, and very good-looking. The young countess bade Zenobie go down and conduct her up. Ere long afterwards the attendant returned, and with her came Claudia Nevel. Rosalind had not seen the good woman for over a year, but she knew her at once, and starting up from her seat she bounded forward and embraced her warmly.

"Ah, Aunt Claudia, I am glad you have come. You will let me call you aunt, as I did in those happy times long gone by."

"Aye, sweet Rosalind," returned the widow, imprinting a warm kiss upon the fair white brow.

The countess noticed the strange sadness of the woman's tone, and then, for the first time, also, she noticed the sadness of her look.

"Aunt Claudia, you look sad," she said, while a chill dread struck to her own heart.

"Aye," the widow uttered, as though she were afraid to venture the question she wished to ask. "I have been very sad, because I have had a terrible fear. Has—has—not Ruric been here?"

"When?" uttered the maiden, catching the whole fear now.

"Within these three days?"

"Just then. Day before yesterday he was here—in the forenoon."

"And I have not seen him since!" the poor woman groaned.

"Not seen him?—Ruric gone? Oh! where? where?"

"He said he was going to see the Count Damonoff when he left here," interposed Zenobie, who joined in the grief.

"Aye—so he told me," returned the mother. "I have been there, and they have not seen him since that evening. The surgeon who attends the Count went out to the inn where Ruric put up his horse, and the animal was still there, his owner having not called there for him."

"Oh! God have mercy!" ejaculated the young countess, in a paroxysm of grief.

At this moment there came a rap upon the door, and Zenobie went to answer the summons. It was the black monk, Valdimir, who thus demanded admittance. At any other time both Rosalind and Claudia might have been startled by the strange visit, but now they instinctively hailed his coming as a source of hope.

"Ladies," spoke the fat monk, approaching the spot where they stood, and bowing very low, "you will pardon this unseemly method of gaining admission here, but I had no other choice, for I feared the Duke would refuse me did I apply to him. I have come to learn, if possible, where Ruric Nevel may be."

The widow tried to answer, but instead of speaking she burst into tears. Rosalind struggled a moment with the deep emotions that stirred within her, and she, too, fell to weeping. Zenobie was obliged to answer.

"Good father," she said, "we here are after the same knowledge. His poor mother has come here to try if she might find some clue to the noble youth; and thus did my mistress gain the first intelligence that he was gone. Pray, good sir, do you know anything about him? What have you heard?"

Both Claudia and the young countess now raised their heads, for they would hear what reply the monk could make.

"I only know that he is missing," Valdimir replied. "A little while ago I called upon the sick Count, and there I learned that Ruric Nevel had mysteriously disappeared. And I learned, also, of the noble purpose for which he visited the Count."

"Aye," interposed Claudia, with sudden energy, "he went to try and gain the Count's forgiveness. I don't think they spoke falsely there. I don't think any there would wish him harm from any lingering revenge."

"No, no," returned the monk; "his mission thither was most nobly fulfilled. So far from cherishing any spirit of revenge is the Count, that he will ever bear for Ruric the holiest gratitude of his soul."

"Do you think so?" the widow asked, hopefully.

"I know it," was the monk's assured reply. "But," he continued, relapsing into perplexity, "I cannot imagine what has become of him. But hold—My dear child, is there not a humpbacked, ungainly priest who sometimes visits your guardian?"

This was addressed to Rosalind, and a fearful tremor shook her frame as she heard it, for its import was at once apparent.

"Do you suspect——" She had started forward and grasped the monk's arm, as she thus commenced, but she could not continue. The thought she would have uttered was terrible.

"Go on," whispered Valdimir, bending his head low down so as to catch her very thoughts if they left her lips. "What would you say?"

"Oh! I ought not— And yet I know his soul is capable even of that." Thus much the fair countess murmured to herself; and then she gazed up and spoke to the strange man before her:

"Do you suspect my guardian?"

"Do *you* suspect him?" the monk returned.

"Oh! I know not what to think."

"But listen:" resumed Valdimir, earnestly. "I would know all that you know, and then perhaps I can assist you. Fear not, for as true as God lives I mean to save Ruric if I can; and if I can but gain a clue to him now, I can surely save you both. Trust me, for I possess a wondrous power for the good of those who trust me. Now what end could the Duke have in view in wishing for Ruric's removal. I know what he had in view in concocting the duel: It was the death of Damonoff, and the undivided possession of Drotzen. Now answer me. What does he aim at now."

In spite of all doubts Rosalind found herself trusting the monk. There was an air of conscious truth and power in his look and tone that won upon her.

"Good father," she returned, after a few moments' thought, "the Duke has sworn by a most fearful oath that he will have me for his wife!"

"Ha!" uttered the monk, starting back a pace and clenching his hands. "Does he mean that?"

"Oh! most truly he does," the young Countess replied; and she spoke more firmly now, for there was something in the sudden energy of the monk's exclamation that gave her hope.

"Then he wants your estates, too. By my soul, he is aiming for wealth with a high hand. And do you suppose he fears Ruric Nevel in connexion with this scheme?"

"Yes father.—I will speak plainly, for I trust you. I do not think you would betray one who never harmed you."

"Let the end of these things tell you that. But now finish what you had begun—about your thoughts of the Duke."

"He knows, holy father, that I love Ruric, and he knows, too, that Ruric loves me. May he not, under such circumstances, fear that the noble youth will try to thwart him?"

"Very likely," returned Valdimir, thoughtfully. "I will profit by this, and I am much mistaken if you do not also profit by it. I have those in Moscow who will work for me. I cannot, of course, directly assure you of salvation, for Ruric may be never found!"

A quick groan escaped from Claudia's lips as the monk thus spoke; but before Rosalind could speak the door of the apartment was opened, and the Duke of Tula strode in! He stopped as he came nigh to where the company stood, and his eyes flashed, and his frame trembled with passion.

"How now?" he cried, as soon as he could command speech. "What means this gathering here in my own palace? Meddling monk, how dare you drag your detestable form hither? Out, reptile! Out! And let me catch you hear again and my dogs shall tear you up as they do carrion!"

Without a word the monk turned away. His face was pale as death, and his hands were clenched till the finger's ends seemed to settle themselves into the palms.

"Remember," the Duke exclaimed, as Valdimir reached the door, "if you dare to cross my door-stool again——"

"Hold!" gasped the monk, in a hoarse, startling tone. "Offer no more threats. But mark me, proud Duke.—You shall see the day on which you'll wish God had made you a dog ere he gave you speech to arouse the just vengeance of Valdimir!"

And thus speaking the black monk disappeared. Olga started to pursue him, but he did not follow out the impulse. Ere he reached the door he stopped and turned back.

"And you, woman—who art thou? he uttered, turning an angry look upon Claudia.

"I am a mourning mother in search of her lost son," the woman sadly replied.

"Ha! I see the likeness now. You are the woman Nevel—mother of the young villain who bears that name! Leave my palace at once; and don't you dare to enter it again!"

The poor woman tried to speak, but she could not. With a deep sob she turned away, and slowly walked from the room.

"Now," resumed the Duke, turning towards Rosalind, "what means this secret council?"

"My lord," returned the Countess, struggling hard to overcome her powerful emotions, "they were here—to—to——"

But she could not finish the sentence. Her soul was too deeply moved. She only gave the foul wretch one look of horror and disgust, and then covering her face with her hands, she sobbed aloud.

If the bad man had anything farther to say, he reserved it for some future time.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PLOTTER IS AT WORK.

The Count Conrad Damonoff, was able to sit up. He was in a great stuffed chair, playing with a favorite dog, while near by him sat Stephen Urzen. The young nobleman had gained rapidly since the visit of Ruric, for the antidotes he had taken had proved efficient, and he soon came back to the point he had reached before the administering of the poison.

"Stephen," he said, pushing his dog gently from him, "has anything been heard yet from Ruric Nevel?"

"Not that I know of," returned Urzen.

"Oh, I wish I were able to assist in the search. But have you heard anything of what suspicions may be afloat?"

"Only that the hump-backed priest is looked upon by some as having had some hand in it."

"Ha—and how does suspicion point towards him?"

"Why—in no direct way, I believe. I cannot understand it. All I know is, he is suspected."

The Count pondered a few moments, and he thought he could see it. Urzen did not know the secret of his friend's strange relapse, for that had been kept private; so he had no clue to the priest's true character such as the Count possessed.

"I believe the fellow is a villain," Urzen resumed. "He is surely a villainous looking man."

"So he is," responded the Count.

"I never saw such a wicked look before in any human face."

"Ah," uttered a voice close by the door. "Who comes in for the flattering remark, my friend?"

Both the Count and Stephen turned, and the hump-backed priest himself stood in their presence.

"Ha!" he uttered, as he noticed the position of the invalid. "Up? By the Holy Virgin, you are recovering!"

"Aye," returned Conrad, "I am gaining fast now, as you may see."

The priest struggled hard with his feelings, and at length he managed to conceal the deep disappointment he felt. That is—he hid it from Stephen's eyes, but the Count knew him too well.

"You have not been very punctual of late, father," the latter said, also trying to conceal his real feelings.

"No—no," returned Savotano, in a perplexed manner. "I admit it; but the fact is, I have been called away. Let's see—I have not been here since the evening on which I found a stranger sitting by your side while you were asleep."

"Who was the stranger?"

"I don't know. I think I never saw him before. He was a good looking young man. Perhaps he was some relative of yours."

This downright falsehood—so bold and flagrant—astonished even the Count, for he knew the conversation which the priest had held with Ruric on that occasion. And quick as lightning, too, went the thought to the sick man's mind that this was to hide the probability of his being suspected in connection with Ruric's disappearance.

"I thought you knew that man," the Count said, looking the priest sharply in the face.

"No. I may have seen him before, but I did not surely recognize him then. I asked him why he was here, but he would not answer me save by urging me to silence. Who was he, my son?"

The Count was at first inclined not to answer, but he thought better of it, and finally told the priest that it was Ruric Nevel. The villain seemed much surprised at this, and professed to wonder why the fellow should come to *that* place. Urzen, who knew nothing of the falsehood which rested under all this questioning, went on and explained the nature of Ruric's mission, and its result. And thereupon Savotano expressed a wondrous degree of joy and gratification; and he presumed even to bless God that such a reconciliation had taken place.

"And now," the priest resumed, after this matter had been disposed of, "how happened this sudden change in your disease, my son? The doctors thought you dying when I was here last."

"Yes—I know," answered the Count, still hiding the deep disgust that moved within him; "but a new physician was called in, and he prescribed a new medicine. He said the medicine I had been taking was unsuited to my case, and so he gave me new. You can see the result."

"Yes—I see," was the reply; "and as you seem to have very good company I'll take my leave. I have several calls to make before night."

The Count made no reply to this, and as the priest found that he was not urged to remain he arose at once. He stopped twice before he reached the door, but in neither case did he speak. As soon as he gained the street he turned towards the upper part of the city, and he stopped not until he had reached the palace of the Duke of Tula. The old porter admitted him without question, and he made his way at once to the hall, where he inquired for the Duke. One of the servants went in search of his master, and when he returned he bade the priest follow him.

The Duke was in his private room, and as soon as the servant had withdrawn he bade his visiter take a seat.

"Now, Savotano, how is it?" he asked. have you seen the Count?"

"Aye—I am from there now. By all that's bad, my lord, the villain is gaining."

"Gaining?" repeated Olga, with surprise. "But you assured me he was well nigh gone."

"So he was—so he was. But he is recovering now."

"But how is it?"

"Why—he tells me he had a new physician, and that the old medicine was all condemned, and an entire new course prescribed."

"And under this new treatment he is recovering, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well—have you not taken some measures to fix this new medicine? By the gods, Savotano, you must not let him slip now."

"Ah, my lord, I have only told you how he explained the matter. I have another explanation."

"What is it, sir priest?"

"Why—they simply know that some one has attempted to poison the Count."

"Ha! Did they say anything?"

"No—there was no need. I know that the medicine he was taking before was the right kind of medicine, so far as it came from the hands of the surgeon. And then there is another thing: The Count must have had some powerful antidote on purpose for the poison."

"How do you know that?"

"Simply because he would not have now been alive had not such been the case. You may be sure, my lord, that they know poison has been administered. They have discovered it in some way, and taken the most effective and speedy method to overcome it. I know this."

"And do you think they suspect you?" the Duke asked, with some show of uneasiness.

"I don't know, but I fear they do. However, that amounts to nothing—only to prevent me from working any farther at present in the same direction. I have not laid myself open to detection in any way. By heavens, 'tis too bad! In four-and-twenty hours more he would have been a dead man."

"Then you know when the discovery was made?"

"Yes—on the afternoon before Ruric Nevel was captured. I was there just before night, and the gun-maker was then there, and I noticed that the phials were gone from the table, though I gave no signs then of having noticed it. They had even then commenced some treatment for his cure, for I could see that the appearance of his skin had changed. You must not blame me."

"I do not, Savotano. But there may be some way left yet."

"O, yes,—there are a hundred ways in which we can dispose of him. But I may find some way yet before he gets out."

"Look ye," the Duke said, after a short pondering over his own thoughts, "you must watch every chance. Something may turn up in our favor. You may find some opportunity to finish him yet. I wish you could."

I will do all I can; be sure of that. I shall watch narrowly. And now about the other one. Young Nevel is safe, and can be disposed of at any moment. I have let him live thus far because I had no orders otherwise."

"Aye—that was right," replied Olga; and as he did so he arose and commenced to pace the room. The priest followed him with his eyes, but said nothing. At length the Duke stopped and looked Savotano in the face.

"It would not be a difficult case to kill him," he uttered, in a low whisper.

"Not at all. Nothing could be more easy."

"And could detection ensue?"

"In no possible way."

"Then—"

"Listen:" spoke the hump-back, as Olga hesitated. "I strongly suspect that 'twas this same gun-maker that led to the investigation of that medicine; and if it was him, then you will be more quickly suspected than I shall."

"Ha! Why think ye so?"

"Because he is a fellow of wondrous wit and intelligence, and can see without being told. He has had several conferences here, and it was from here that he went direct to the Count's residence. He knows by this time why the duel was hatched up, and if he has half the mind I give him credit for he will know that you are at the bottom of the poisoning business. I am sure of this."

"By heavens, you are right, Savotano. Let him die!"

"I had thought myself that would be the best way; for if he were at large you would not be safe."

"You can have him killed without noise or disturbance?"

"I think so," replied the priest, with a wicked smile. "At all events, his noise would not hurt any one, for he is rather too far away from the world to make himself heard."

"Where is he?"

"Why—where you recommended: In the furtherest vault beneath your old bathing-house; and that is a place where he cannot be readily found."

"And what disposition can you make of the body after the work is done?"

"Why—that is simple. It can be hidden in the old conduit. You know the conduit still exists there, and probably in some places between there and the river it is perfect; but near the building it is all in ruins. The body can be hidden so far in, that no stench can come from it in summer time even to those in the vault itself. So you see that is easy."

"Then let the work be done at once—say to-night."

"To-morrow night, my lord, will do as well for I am engaged to-night."

"Very well—let it be to-morrow night. But mind—this is settled. There is no more question about this affair. When I see you again I trust you will have no reason to offer why Ruric Nevel has not been disposed of."

"You need have no fears on that head, my lord. You may consider that the gun-maker is dead."

"Right! So let it be."

And thus did the stout Duke dispose of Ruric Nevel!

Again Olga took a turn across the room, and when he stopped there was a dark cloud upon his brow.

"Savotano," he said, "there is one more man whom I at least would be assured is not *in* my way. I mean that infernal monk."

"I saw him this morning, my lord, and I am sure he is watching me. And he is not alone. He has others with him. I have been followed, and one of my men—the one who entrapped Nevel—told me, not two hours ago, that he knew his steps had been followed."

"And do you think this monk is at the bottom of it?" asked the Duke, with some uneasiness.

"I know it, for I have seen him when I knew he was watching me."

"Then why have you not got him out of the way?"

"Aha," uttered the priest, with a dubious shake of the head, "we cannot always do as we would. But he shall not live long—if I can help him off; and I think the opportunity may offer itself."

"He is a bold fellow. Why—I found him only yesterday in my own palace—in the chamber of the Countess."

"Ha! And could you not have disposed of him then?"

"Not well. It was in broad day, and people were about. But if I find him here again my sword shall find his heart. I have given him legal warning. But," continued the Duke, after some further thought, "you must be careful in your dealings with him. He may have some organised band always about him."

"I will be caught in no trap," returned the priest, confidently. "He shall find that I can be as keen as he can. But it is very strange—"

"What is strange?" asked Olga, starting, for he too, had been thinking of a very strange thing.

"Why—that this black monk should turn up here in Moscow so suddenly, and commence, the first thing, to dog my foot-steps, and hang about your palace."

"Aye," responded Olga. "And the same thought was in my mind when you spoke. But never mind—he shall not escape me if he presumes much more. By heavens! they shall know that the Duke of Tula is not to be trifled with. There is but one power in Moscow above mine, and that is the Emperor himself; and I may say that even he is not above me. He cannot get along without me. Does anything turn up to puzzle him he sends straight-way for me."

"Then use your power for your own good, my lord."

"I will. Fear not for me on that score."

At this juncture the priest arose to take his leave.

"You have your instructions," said Olga.

"I remember them well, my lord—and they shall be carried out to the letter."

"And when done, let me know."

"I will obey."

And once more the mis-shapen priest was in the street, and the Duke was alone.

"Ah, my lord," muttered the pliant tool to himself, as he walked thoughtfully along, "you may be a little too confident of your own power. I have known such things in Russia!"

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

THE IRASCIBLE HUSBAND;

OR,

THE ADVANTAGE OF BEING AVARICIOUS.

A stranger of great distinction, and who has played no inconsiderable part in the political drama of the day, has lately returned to Paris, where some years since he dwelt for a long time. On his first visit to the capital, young and already famous, he married into the aristocracy of the Faubourg Saint Germain. The return of this personage has excited the curiosity of the Parisian world, justified, it would seem by former eccentricities, and by a strangeness of character which may be traced in the anecdote now going the rounds of the talkmongers. The individual in question was not born and educated in the class, where he now finds himself placed by the right of personal merit. Instead of being tempered by early education, his disposition naturally violent, unrestrained and uncultivated, was rendered almost ungovernable by the habits of a life spent amid camps. His fortune too, like his greatness, came to him late; and it has been frequently remarked that those who obtain riches by their own efforts and in middle life, possess a lively and powerful attachment for the wealth which long privation and laborious conquest have taught them immoderately to value.

So that at the time of this illustrious stranger's entrance into the world of Paris, those shrewd observers, the envious and jealous of other's prosperity, remarked that his shining qualities were darkened by two very great faults—avarice and brutality. The latter of these faults was a sad feature in his married life, and was the cause of poignant suffering to a wife well born, brought up in the most polished society, surrounded by affectionate relatives, and accustomed to all the refinements of aristocratic good breeding. It was not long before she was made to feel the change, for the character of her husband began to display itself in the early days of her married life, and a shade of bitter to mingle with the sweetness of the honey-moon. This was sad, and all the promised happiness faded away. The union which had commenced under the most favorable auspices, saw its charms destroyed by stormy half-hours which became more and more frequent. It required all the rare virtue of the young wife not to succumb to the trials which humiliation, terror, injury and grief, compelled her to undergo.

One day, after a scene of conjugal violence which had occurred in the presence of many witnesses, the irascible husband entered his own apartment, whither he was followed by an old and tried friend, who by his devotion and uprightness had earned the right to speak plainly, a right he did not hesitate to exercise. Without heeding the still unsuppressed rage, he very freely commented on the conduct of his friend so unbecoming in a gentleman. The culprit listened with a gloomy air, and when the lecture was terminated, said:

"Your reproof is just, I deserve it, and I reproach myself more bitterly than you have done; but what would you have? it is stronger than I am, it is out of my power to control it; I give way to my passion, fly into a rage and forget myself. When it is over I am ashamed, despairing, and yet all this does not prevent me from recommencing, and sometimes even the very next day. It is fatal."

"Yes, very fatal."

"I have need of a good lesson, and will teach it to myself."

And the culprit for some minutes strode through the apartment with rapid steps and lowering brow, keeping silence and twisting in his fingers a cigarette. The expression of his features and the contraction of his forehead, betrayed the painful thoughts and stormy conflict which were going on within; then, his resolution taken, he opened a drawer and took from it a bank bill for one thousand francs. His friend looked on with astonishment, unable to imagine what he was about to do. He rolled up the bill, put it in the taper and lighted his cigar by the flame of the precious paper. The friend, stupified at this strange action, strange in a man with whose excessive parsimony he was so well acquainted, rushed towards him.

"Leave me!" said the miser, with choking voice.

"But, you are mad."

"No, I know what I am doing—I am punishing myself."

When the bill was nothing but a small heap of black ashes, our hero—and he may be called one after this action—added, in a firm and solemn voice:

"I swear, on my honor, that each time I give way to any brutality towards my wife, I will punish myself in the most sensitive part, my love of money."

This oath was religiously kept. Since that day the miser has strictly paid for the brutality of the husband. After a scene of violence he appears before his self-appointed tribunal, and submitting to the law which he himself lays down, he pronounces his sentence without appeal. The condemned opens the casket which contains his treasure. Pale and trembling with the effort beneath which his passion bends, he takes a bank bill and burns it.

The expiation was always proportioned to the offence; he had a tariff graduated by the degrees of crime; for a simple harshness the price was five hundred francs, for a harshness before witnesses, one thousand, and if gesture and action had followed the spoken brutality, it was two thousand francs. This course, his friend states, might have ruined him, for in a single month it cost him thirty thousand francs. But happily it turned out otherwise. He became an entirely changed man. His faults have completely disappeared. The severity of the remedy worked a perfect cure. Now he is kind, gallant and amiable towards his wife, and his evenness of disposition is proof against all shocks; and what is stranger still, he has become liberal and generous, and spends his ample fortune freely and intelligently.

Happy they who have not only the force of mind, but the means of so eradicating a vice. Whether many other husbands will follow the example when they have faults to correct in themselves, is a matter of considerable doubt.

THE CHARM OF AN OLD HOUSE.

"I love old houses best (says Southey,) for the sake of the odd closets, and cupboards, and good thick walls that don't let the wind blow in, and little out-of-the-way poly-angular rooms with great beams running across the ceiling—old heart of oak, that has outlasted half a score generations—and chimney-pieces with the date of the year carved above them, and huge fire-places that warmed the shins of Englishmen before the House of Hanover came over. The most delightful associations that ever made me feel, and think, and fall a dreaming, are excited by old buildings—not absolute ruins, but in a state of decline. Even the clipped yews interest me; and if I found one in any garden that should become mine, in the shape of a peacock, I should be as proud to keep his tail well spread as the man who first carved him."

LOVE OF LIFE.

What a native clinging of mankind to this poor life there must be, what an inextinguishable sweetness in the mere fact of existence, or at least what a dread of the hour of dissolution, which millions of human beings placed in circumstances which many of their fellow creatures regard as insufferably wretched, yet pursue their weary journey faithfully to its natural end, grudging to lose the smallest inch! Watch a poor old man in rags slowly dragging him self along in a mean street as if every step was a pain. His life has been one of toil and hardship, and now he may be wifeless, friendless, and a beggar. What makes that man hold on any longer to existence at all? Is it any remnant of positive pleasure he still contrives to extract from it—the pleasure of talking twaddle to people who will listen to him, of looking about him at children playing, of peering into doors as he passes; is it fear and a calculation of chances, or is it the mere imbecility of habit? Who can tell?

IN FOR IT.

BY NATHALIE CARL.

"About—this—time—expect—a—storm," as the almanac makers say! What do you suppose my friend, Mr. Carl, is doing at this present writing? He isn't here with me—and he doesn't think I see him—but the curtain of the office window happens to be drawn back and I can just catch a glimpse of a coat and hat and cigar sitting beside a table heaped up with papers—and quake in my shoes when I think what it all means.

You are not to suppose, by any means, that Mr. Carl was my first lover. I hope I understand "the proprieties" better than to make such a laughing stock of myself and him! No—when I married Mr. Carl I had learned a lesson or two that did me good, and took him just *because* I *didn't* love him well enough to feel any uneasiness under the third whalebone of my corsage, in case he took a furious fancy to one of my lady friends, and left me to my own devices because it "is so vulgar to seem so anxious about one's wife."

We are, or rather, we have been, a model couple. (What we shall be after my friend in the next room finishes the perusal of those papers it is impossible to say!) Mr. Carl has looked unutterable things at my confidential friend Julia—(he little knew how we compared notes every morning, and shook our sides over the folly of our wooer's haloes!) he has sent her boquets, and anonymous billet doux over which we have laughed till we cried—he has kissed my seamstress on the stairs, and returned to his house at most unorthodox hours of the night, and so "elevated" that the heels of his boots were on an angle of 45 degrees with his head—and I have never lisped a word of complaint or reproach. Why should I? I have my carriage, my coachman and footman—plenty of pin money and an unlimited account at Stewart's. What is it to me how Mr. Carl passes his time, provided he doesn't encroach on mine?

But now we have come to a rock that is not to be sneezed at! Mr. Carl, I am sorry to say, is as jealous as a wild cat, and about as quiet when he thinks occasion demands a due display of temper. Owing to his infirmity and the carelessness of an abominable chambermaid we are about to have a "squall."

You must know, dear reader, that in my verdancy, I was once terribly in love! That disorder, like the measles, comes to young and old alike, at some period of their lives. Mine was a most aggravated case. I sighed and wept, and laughed alternately—looked pensively at the moon, and wrote sonnets to the stars; hived up every flower or book *he* touched; went frantic over a lock of his hair; wore pink because it was his favorite color, though I looked like a Patagonian squaw in it; pinched up my feet in the most excruciatingly tight shoes, and wore gloves that would give me the night-mare now; tortured my hair into curls with hot irons, till I burnt off half of one ear and the tip of the other. "In short," as Mr. Micawber would say, I made a terrible fool of myself in the most approved method. If I had stopped here, it might have all been well enough; but I couldn't rest contented till I had written some scores of letters to him, on rose-scented and tinted note paper, with the finest of gold pens and blue ink; all commencing religiously with "My own love," and ending with "Thine till death, Nathalie."

And such letters! "O ye gods and little fishes!" Is it possible that I, Nathalie Carl, supposed to be in sound mind and the undisturbed possession of all my senses, could ever have written such stuff? Fancy me telling any one "I only live when you are near me, and languish like a withered rose when you are away!" Withered cabbage head! Do I look like a woman to indite such nonsense? I, whose whole soul is wrapped up in the question whether I shall wear my bonnet on the back of my head, or "go the whole figure," and let it hang between my shoulders? It is preposterous! Ridiculous!

The beauty of it is, that these letters are the very things over which Mr. Carl is poring. Through the agency of Bridget, who never was guilty of doing anything yet as she was told, they have fallen into his clutches. I told her to burn them, and the stupid creature took them down to light his office fire with, of all things in the world!

I can see him squirm and twist as I look through the office curtain, and he has burnt himself in a dozen places with his cigar. There goes the lighted end into his mouth! Just hear the man swear! Oh, dear, it's *such* a trial to be a married woman!

He's locking up the letters; he's buttoning up his coat, and here—the saints defend us—here he comes! Now for it! I don't expect to survive the interview; he'll certainly smother me with the sofa pillow, or roast me over a slow fire, *lit with those letters,* before I'm a day older!

In case my misdemeanor is forgiven, my readers will hear from me again. If not, they will know where to look for my "miserable remains." Here he is! Confound those love-letters! You won't catch me writing another—never—*till next time!*

THE BETRAYED.

BY SPENCER WALLACE CONE.

I.

Mother, my breath grows shorter,—
Scarce can I whisper now ;—
Dark shades weigh down mine eyelids,
And the death damp's on my brow,
I know that I am dying ;—
Oh! not for that I moan,—
But I must leave thee, in the world,
A widow, and alone.
Weep not for me, my mother;
No sting is in the dart,—
I go where there's oblivion
For this poor broken heart.

II.

'Tis hard to leave thee, mother;
But, oh, 'twere worse to stay,
And see thee watch me daily
Wither and pine away.
Hush, hush!—You never scorned me ;—
Your breast was not defiled
With sheltering and caressing
Your sinful stricken child.
God left you to me, mother,
When he took all beside,
To lead my erring spirit
Back to the crucified.

III.

Hark!—if you meet *him*, mother,
Tell him the love I gave
Died not until this body
Was cold within the grave.
Tell him that I forgave him
My wrongs, and wasted life,—
And prayed he might be happy
With her he made his wife.
No,—tell him not ; the message
Might roll back memory's tide.
I would not he looked coldly
Upon his trusting bride.

IV.

Hold me still closer to thee,
All things are fading now,
Except the holy angels :—
I saw one kiss thy brow.
Let me too touch it mother,
It is not hard to die
When such as these are waiting
For sinner such as I.
Joy! joy, my more than mother,
A little while we part
To meet where peace and pardon
Bind up the broken heart.

THE RAT-CATCHER OF PARIS.

FROM HIS OWN RECORDS.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

I was thirteen years old, and all I knew of myself was, that my name was Flavien and that since my earliest recollection I had been kicked about the great city like a dog. I supposed, after I became old enough to think, that I must have had parents at some time, but who they were I knew not. The memory which reached farthest back was of a dark garret in the Rue de la Pepiniere, and of an old woman named Barbe, who used to live amid a heap of rags which she taught me how to gather in the streets. But just as I had learned to work Barbe died, and I should have starved had I not cried to such good purpose that an old man who occupied part of the same house came to see me. He found me alone by the dead body of the woman, and when he knew how things had turned he asked me if I would come and live with him. I told him yes. Then he searched all over the room, and I remember very well that he found some gold in an old trunk, which he took and kept. In a little while some men came and carried away the body of old Barbe, and then I went down to live with Gordien, which was the old man's name.

Gordien was a rat-catcher, and he soon learned me to catch rats, too; and after a few years he used to send me out alone, and he gave me a *sou* for every rat I caught. I had learned the way into all the old cellars and into the great sewers of the city, and I could arrange my traps with much skill. Thus I lived until the time of which I make this record. Sometimes I caught as many as twelve in a day. I never asked Gordien what he did with them, though I know that he sold the skins, and I *do not* know that he threw away the flesh. My opinion is, that some of the fattest ones were bought by a pie-maker on the Quai des Augus; but I could not swear to that.

One day, towards night, as I was going home with five rats in one of my traps, a man stopped me and asked me if my name was Flavien. I told him it was, and he then asked me to go with him a short distance. I told him that I must go and carry my rats home. He said he would pay me much more than my rats were worth, and intimated that, if I suited him, he might do well by me. This thought started every energy of my soul into life. For a long time I had been ashamed of my humble condition, and had longed for some more honorable employment. This last remark of the strange man started up a new hope, and I told him I would follow him. He led the way to a hotel on the Rue St. Denis, near the corner of St. Honore, and conducted me to a private parlor, where a great lamp was burning. I had never been in such a place before, and I might have stared at the grand things about me a whole hour had not the man spoken to me. This led me to examine my guide. He was a handsome man, not far from thirty years of age, dressed very sumptuously, and bearing himself with ease and grace.

"Flavien," said he, after he had regarded me for some time, "I have been watching you for several days, and I think you are just the boy I want. Now if I will pay you well, and shield you from all harm, will you do what I want of you, and ask no questions?"

I here remembered one thing that old Barbe had told me before she died. Said she to me, "Flavien, if you would prosper in life, never part with your own will; and never venture into a place from which you cannot see your way out." I thought of this, and told the man I should like to work for him, but that I could not promise to do anything which I could not wholly understand.

"But you can keep a secret, I suppose?" he said.

I told him that I would never break a promise.

"Then," said he, "you will suit me. I have some curious business for you to do. Do you know who your parents were?"

"No, sir," I told him.

"That is good. You shall sleep here to-night, and to-morrow I shall want you to commence."

"But Gordien will beat me if I stay away all night," I said.

"Do not fear on that account, my boy," answered the man. "I give you my word that your master shall not beat you; and perhaps you may never go back to him. If you suit me, and serve me well, I may take you into my service."

Thus the man quieted my fears, and I finally consented to remain with him all night. He gave me some supper, and then conducted me to a room where he said I should sleep, and bade me blow out the light when I got into bed. After he had left me I gazed around upon the walls, and upon the bed, and I felt almost afraid to get into such a grand affair as that bed then appeared to me. But I was weary, and I did not hesitate long. I pulled off my ragged garments and crawled into the soft bed, and was soon asleep. I was fatigued enough to sleep soundly, but the curious events of the evening kept me dreaming, and so I suppose I was more wakeful.

I cannot tell how long I had slept, but I was aroused sometime during the night by hearing the door of my room shut. I started up, and found the moonlight shining through my window, but there was no person there save myself. I was upon the point of closing my eyes again when I heard voices in an adjoining room, and upon looking around again I discovered what I had not discovered before—that a door which I had supposed was a closet opening, really opened into another apartment. I could see the gleams of candle light through the crevices. I soon heard my name pronounced, and also heard one man, whose voice I at once recognized as that of my guide, assure another that I was asleep. Of course I now had a curiosity to get up and listen; and I did so. I placed my ear close to the crack of the door, and could hear every word that was spoken.

I soon learned that the name of my strange friend was Gerard Aventin; and the other I only could understand as Philip.

"I tell you," said Aventin, rather earnestly, "we will punish her thus. I know she once had a child, though she supposes we know nothing of it; and I am confident her child was lost. I think she gave it away so that it might never come back to shame her."

I was interested now; and I remained there nearly an hour listening to the plotting of those two men; and what I learned from it was just this:—There was a woman, named Corinne Montferon, who was very beautiful, very rich, and very proud. Gerard Aventin loved her, and she appeared to favor him, but had lately refused him admittance to her presence. This had exasperated the lover, and he sought revenge. He had accidentally learned that Corinne once had a child, and he had been out to the department of the Upper Marne, where she then lived, to find out the particulars. There he had heard a story to the effect that she had a child a number of years before, and had given it away, and then moved away herself. Of course the production of a child now, of which she was the mother, would crush her at once with shame and disgrace. And—I was to be forced upon her as her child! The last words I heard Aventin speak that night were these:—

"It is all plain, Philip. This boy must be about the same age that her child would have been had it lived, and I have already taken measures for fictitious proof. For a very small sum of gold the old man with whom this boy has lived will swear to anything; so we can easily fix up the proof. At least, we will bring the proud Corinne to the confession that she has been a mother, and then farewell to her airs."

I crept back to my bed, and hardly had I got snugly stowed away ere the door opened, and one of the men looked in, and I heard him say,—"All right."

I did not go to sleep very soon after this. At first I very flatly resolved to have nothing more to do with Gerard Aventin. In the morning I meant to tell him that I must go home, for that I would not be a party to any such revenge as they contemplated. But ere long a new thought came to my mind—and it came with strange force, too. I had never known a mother, but many and many a long hour had I lain awake in my lowly bed of straw and wished that I might at some time find one. Suppose this woman should really prove to be my true mother! The thought came to me with a whelming force, and for a while my heart beat till it seemed ready to leap from my bosom. I had heard of things more strange than that. I was not a bad looking boy, and I knew now that I had been thus selected because my features were regular, and, in some degree, handsome. At all events, the thought was with me, and I could not drive it away. Oh! should she be my mother, and willing to own her boy!—"

So ran my strange fancies until I fell asleep, and all the rest of the night I dreamed of finding my mother.

In the morning Aventin came to my room, and having seen me dressed, he bade me follow him and get some breakfast. He conducted me to the same room where I had been on the previous evening, and there I found breakfast all prepared. I sat down to eat, and my host sat down with me. Little was said during the meal, but after we had eaten he opened the subject upon which he had called me.

"Suppose I should tell you where you might find your mother?" said he.

"I should be very glad if she was a good woman," I told him.

"Well," he added, "the woman who I think is your mother is not only very good, but very wealthy."

Of course I professed to be very much surprised, and very eager, and after a while Aventin went on to explain his meaning. He did not say he was sure the woman in question was my parent, but he professed to believe she was. And he furthermore professed to be doing all this for the good of the woman as well as for my own. He said he had been to Langres, in the department of Upper Marne, and had there learned enough to convince him that Corinne's child was living somewhere in Paris. Then he asked me if I would go and see the woman, and claim her for my mother. Said he,—

"This is the only way to do it. You must go to her house—go directly to her room—and claim that you are her son. Should it prove that she is not your mother I will pay you well for your time and trouble. So you see you can but gain on either hand. Should you find a mother it will be everything to you; and should you fail in that you will have earned more than you could earn at your trade in two years."

Of course I knew the man was lying to me, and my first impulse was to tell him that I would have nothing more to do with him. But I remembered that THOUGHT. I remembered the dreams I had dreamed—and the strange hope would not leave me.

"Should she prove my mother!"

The thought ran riot in my soul, and I gave up to it. I resolved that I would do all he asked; and so I told him. He seemed much pleased, and told me I should never repent, nor regret it, and asked me if I would remain there during the day if he would bring me some pictures to look at. I told him yes. So he brought me some great books full of prints, and then went out.

During the forenoon I washed my face at a sink I saw in a closet, and then brushed my hair. Shortly after noon Aventin came in and told me he had made arrangements for me to go that very afternoon. Again my heart came nigh failing me, but that strange HOPE kept me to my promise. We eat dinner, and then Gerard Aventin bid me follow him. There was one more struggle—one more thought of the base purpose of petty revenge for which I was to be used—one more gleam of the HOPE—and then I followed my master.

In the hall of the hotel we met a man, whom, when he spoke, I recognized as the one that had held the midnight conversation with Aventin close to my chamber. I now learned that his name was Philip Lafont. He was a wealthy young man, and was one of Corinne's ardent admirers. He, too, had been slighted by the beauty, and was looking after revenge.

We turned into the Rue St. Honore, passed the Palais Royale, and then entered the Rue de Richelieu, keeping on to the Boulevard Montmartre, where I was bade to stop while my guide went on ahead. I remained some ten or fifteen minutes standing by one of the great trees on the boulevard, and then Aventin came back. He looked eager and anxious, and I could see that he trembled some.

"She's in her boudoir, and has company," he said to Lafont. "The count is there, and several others. Oh, what a time there'll be. Come—come.—Now mind you, Flavien," he added, turning to me, "you will follow me directly up. I shall show you the woman—I shall say to her—'Here is your long lost child,'—and then you must rush forward into her arms. Do you comprehend?"

"Yes," I told him.

"And will you do it?" he asked me.

I promised him I would, and then we started on. Ere many moments we stopped before a splendid dwelling, and Aventin led the way to the hall. I heard him say to the servant—"This is the boy I was to bring," and then we ascended a flight of marble steps. I was almost blind now with the wild emotion that seized me; but I stopped not. Ere long we came to a door covered with velvet tapestry, and here my guide turned to me and said,—

"Here we are. Beyond this door is your mother. Remember now, what you have promised."

Then he opened the door, and I followed him into the boudoir. I saw a sumptuously-furnished apartment, and a blaze of gaudy dresses; but instinctively my eyes rested upon a beautiful woman who stood at the head of the room. She was beautiful—transcendantly so—and I saw the look of alarm upon her fair face. I could see that there was a general wonder among the visitors, and then I heard Aventin say,—

"Madame, my dear, I have done well for you. Here is your long-lost child—the offspring of your own blood—returned to you. I have found him—and he is yours."

For a single instant there was a feeling of shame burning within me; but I had promised—I had hoped—and the hope was not yet dead. Once more I raised my eyes to that beautiful face—I felt the hot tears flowing down my cheeks—and then, with a wild thrill of frantic emotion I bounded forward, and sank upon the woman's bosom with the words—"My mother" upon my lips. She uttered a low cry of fear and alarm, and sank back into the arms of her attendants.

I heard Aventin say something more; it was about my being Corinne's own son—and then he and Philip Lafont left the room. When I fairly recovered from the wild tumult of soul into which I had been thrown I found myself in a small room with two women; and one of them asked me who I was. I told them I wished to see Corinne Montferon—that to her, and her alone, I would tell my story. They conversed awhile apart, and then left me. I remained alone nearly half an hour, and the door was opened, and the beautiful woman stood before me. She gazed into my face a full minute, and then sank into a chair, and in a moment more she asked,—

"Who are you?"

I moved forward and took one of her hands in both mine own, and then, in a low, choking tone I commenced. I had resolved to tell her the whole truth, and I did so. "Pardon me—O, pardon," I murmured. "It is a foul plot that has led to this on the part of those who brought me here, but 'twas a wild hope that took possession of me which led me to follow them."

And then I went on and told her about my earliest days as I could remember—how my first recollection was of old Barbe, and how I had lived with her until she died. And then I told her of the old rat-catcher Gordien who had taken me, and who had also taken what property old Barbe left. And after this I closed by relating all the circumstances connected with my meeting and arrangements with Aventin, only keeping back the conversation I had overheard between him and Lafont.

After I had closed the beautiful woman gazed into my face for some moments, and finally she asked me if I would ride down to where Gordien lived.

"No harm shall befall you," she said. "I will see that the old man does not beat you. It is for a purpose of my own that I ask this."

I told her I would go, and then she bade me obey the person she should send to take care of me until she wanted me. She then left me, and I was sure I saw tears in her eyes as she turned away.

Shortly afterwards a young man, in the garb of a valet, entered, and told me to follow him. He conducted me to a bath, where he caused me to strip off all my clothes; and then commenced such a washing process as I had never undergone before. The water was warm and soft, and highly perfumed. I spent half an hour in the bath, and when I came out I found new white linen ready for me, which I put on. Then I was presented with new clothes, such as I had never even dreamed of wearing, and as soon as I was dressed in these, my new cicerone went at work upon my hair; and when this was done he told me to look in the glass. I did so, and surely no one could have been more surprised than I was myself. My nut-brown curls were glossy and fine, and clustered about a brow which was high and full; and now that my rags and dirt were gone I began to see that I was really a handsome boy.

"*Diable!*" uttered the valet, "if you are not her child, you were at least made for an exact copy. Just her head—and her nose—and her eyes—and her hair. *Pardieu!* you are Madame's own self!"

"Do you think I look like her?" I tremblingly asked.

"Exactly."

In a moment more a female entered and bade me follow her. I found madame in her riding-dress, all ready to start. She started up as I entered, and I saw the quick tremor that shook her frame. I gazed into her face more steadily now, and I loved her from that moment. Oh! she was very beautiful.

"Flavien," she said,—and I could see that she was working very hard to conceal her real emotions,—"I will be ready to set out soon. We shall find Gordien at home at dark."

I told her yes, and then she left me. It was very soon dusk, and just as the gloom of twilight was deepening she came back and took me by the hand. She said nothing only to ask me if I was ready, and then to bid me follow. I had already told her where the old rat-catcher lived. We entered the carriage which stood at the gate, and by the time we reached the Rue de la Pepiniere it was quite dark. I led the way to the room I had occupied so long, and there we found Gordien. He did not know me at first, but when he did discover who I was he checked his astonishment, and pretended to be very angry. But madame very soon put a stop to that.

"I have taken charge of Flavien for the present," she said; "and I wish you to understand that you will advance your own interests by doing just as I wish you to do. And now, first:—where are the papers you found among old Barbe's things?"

The old man hesitated awhile, but finally, when he was made to understand that the papers would be paid for if they were wanted, he went and got them, and gave them to madame. There were only three of them—very dirty and crumpled,—but I quickly saw that they amounted to something, for as madame moved up to the candle and looked them over I could see that she trembled violently. Soon she turned to Gordien and spoke.

"Did you ever hear Barbe say anything about this boy?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered.

"And what did she say?"

"Why—it amountsd to this: She was somewhere in Upper Marne, and a woman brought her an infant and bade her keep it, and also gave her quite a sum of gold to pay her for the trouble."

At this juncture madame motioned for me to leave the room, and I did so. She remained alone with the old man half an hour, and then she came out and led me down to the carriage. When we reached her dwelling she had me conducted to a sleeping room, and there I was told to make myself at home. Not yet had madame said one word touching the one great theme.

On the following morning I was called to breakfast, but it was not until near noon that I saw madame again. She came to me, and I saw that she had been weeping. She simply said,—

"Come,—I have company—some people whom I have sent for."

I followed her to her largest boudoir, and there I found the same people who had been with her on the day before, and with them were Gerard Aventin and Philip Lafont. The two last-mentioned individuals were confounded at thus seeing me dressed up, but ere they could make any remark madame spoke.

"Gentlemen," she said, addressing Aventin and Lafont, "you cannot imagine how deep is the obligation under which you have placed me. But I will explain now what I have never before thought it worth while to tell you. I was born in Bourmont, and though my parents were not wealthy, yet they gave me a thorough education. At the age of seventeen I married the Count Pierre Montferon. He loved me well, and I loved him. During the first year of my married life both my parents died. Shortly after this bereavement I gave birth to a son. When that son was three months old my husband died, leaving to me the whole of his vast wealth; and on the very day of the funeral, while I was following the remains of my lost partner to the tomb, my child was stolen from me. I caused every means of search to be used, but without effect. For a year I saw no company, and during that time I cared little for life.

"Seven years passed away, and at the end of that time I received a call to visit the bedside of a dying woman. I found her to be one whom I had seen in company with the Count several times before I married him. She confessed to me that she had stolen my child. She said she had loved the Count, and that when he made me his wife she had sworn to be revenged. So she stole my infant. She told me she gave it to an old woman who gave her name as Barbe, and who said she was going to live in Paris. That was all I could learn, for the woman breathed her last while I was with her. As soon as I could I moved to Paris determined to find my child, if possible. I made all the inquiry I could make for the woman Barbe, and at length I learned that she was dead—and that was all. I never told my story, for I could not thus lay bare my bleeding heart. Men who have seen me gay and frolicsome dreamed not that I was covering up a sorrow that lay heavy upon my soul. But you, gentlemen, by chance learned my story; or a part of it; and you hoped to crush me—you thought my child, if he lived, a bastard; but see how your foul plot has turned to my blessing. God has surely directed this work. I have been to the place where Barbe lived—I have found her papers—I have seen a man who had her whole story—and—I have found my child. But look—see that face—Oh! were there no other evidence would not that be enough? My boy—my own, my loved, lost, restored boy—"

In another moment I was in her arms—pressed to her throbbing bosom, and her warm tears were mingling with my own. Abashed and fallen Aventin and Lafont crawled away from the house, and then the rejoicing was great. The fact of my identity was established beyond the possibility of doubt, and I knew now that I had found my mother!

Oh! how those moments sparkled in the life-glass. Again and again my mother clasped me to her bosom, and finally she knelt down and thanked God that she had found her child.

Of course such a story could not be kept secret, and ere long Aventin and Lafont left the city to escape the pointed jeers that were aimed at them—though my mother had forgiven them, and even then blessed them for the work they had unintentionally done.

When the bright Spring time came my mother removed to the chateau which she still retained in Langres, and there she attended to my education.

I am now a man grown, but I still live with my mother, and should I, at some future time, take a wife, I would not part with my mother; for I love her too well. I am never so happy as when she smiles upon me; and God grant that I may never cause a pang of sorrow to trouble the soul of the generous being who is my best earthly friend—MY MOTHER.

POVERTY.

Poverty is a bitter draught, but may, and with advantage, be gulped down. Though the drinker makes wry faces, there may, after all, be wholesome goodness in the cup. But debt, however courteously it be offered is the cup of a siren, the wine, spiced and delicious though it be, an eating poison. The man out of debt, though with a flaw in his jerkin, a crack in his shoe-leather, and a hole in his hat, is still a son of Liberty, free as the singing lark above him; but the debtor, though clothed in the utmost bravery, what is he but a serf upon a holiday—a slave to be reclaimed at an instant by his owner, the creditor! My son, if poor, see nectar in the running spring; let thy mouth water at last week's roll; think a threadbare coat "the only wear," and acknowledge a white-washed garret the fittest housing place for a gentleman; do this and flee debt. So shall thy heart be at peace, and the sheriff be confounded.

MODESTY.

Modesty adorns virtue, as bashfulness ornaments beauty; it harmonizes with a just sense of character, as moderation harmonizes with justice. It heightens dignity of character, as simplicity enhances greatness. It adds to merit the same charms which candor adds to greatness of heart. What is modesty? Is it not a sense of excellence so deep and true that the observance of duty appears a natural thing? Is it not so sincere a desire for what is excellent, that what is wanting is much more perceptible than what is already obtained? Is it not so pure a love for what is good, that it forgets the reward reserved for merit in the approbation of others?

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, Editor and Proprietor.

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We cannot undertake to return rejected manuscripts.

LET IT GROW.

New York is growing. As Daniel Webster once said, on a great occasion, "we know what we are saying, and understand what our responsibility is, and we deliberately repeat"—New York is growing. It is becoming a large place. In fact, many men, who are reputed wise, shake their heads as they look around them in this city, and murmur that it is growing too large, that there is too much wealth concentrated in it—too much luxury. Many of our neighboring cities seem to have come to the same way of thinking, and are constantly growling over the growth of New York. But all this internal and external murmuring is ill-founded. It is idle to fret over the greatness of a particular city. Its greatness is the result of a natural law; and so are its wealth, its luxury, and its extravagance.

The man who forces his way from obscurity to eminence and power, naturally gathers around him wealth and absorbing influence, which finally carry on the work of accumulation and extension with irresistible momentum. As it is with the individual, so is it with the aggregation—the city. Trade, commerce, labor, have each a vitalizing and accumulating force which begets more of their kind. They have, also, in combination, an overwhelming centripetal power which constantly draws to them what is most active, most pre-eminent, most productive. And so the city grows and becomes great. And much of its greatness seems to come (as in the case of New York) at the expense of other and smaller places. Towns within the circle of its attractions decrease to villages, and villages to hamlets. But the apparent evil is a real good. These towns and villages are not destroyed, but merely dispersed over a wider surface; they are taken up and sown broad-cast as far as railroads and canals penetrate the land. A greater equality of relationship between all parts of the country ensues. People no longer cluster about the vicinity of a town of four or five thousand inhabitants, for the purpose of being nearer a market; cultivating worn-out land and buying dear goods of country dealers, who are themselves fearful of budging from the neighborhood lest the advantages of trade should slip through their fingers. The great city rises up as the great factor—the great regulator—the great *doer*. The railroad, which reduces hundreds of miles merely to a question of a few hours, with its iron finger points the farmer to the rich lands, the far-sweeping prairies, the unsubdued and teeming forests at its extremity. There he can cheaply buy lands of rich and durable soil, whose abounding produce he can send to New York as directly and with but little more cost than he whose few acres in the vicinity of the great city each cost hundreds of dollars, and must be coaxed into fruitfulness by complex contrivances and costly artificial stimulants.

We have thus solved one of the greatest problems of civilization. All greatness tends to centralization, but in all other ages centralization has been the bane of nations. In the empires of the old world and of buried ages, we read of cities whose magnificence was so transcendant and whose population was so enormous, that, however well attested, we can scarcely refrain from imagining them to be fables of the poets. But with all their power and greatness those States achieved nothing but centralization; and there being no equalizing, compensating *diffusion*, whereby new life and productiveness could be distributed throughout the entire nation, all vitality was withdrawn from the extremities, and the decay thus engendered, beginning at first on the verge gnawed its way steadily to the empire's heart—and it perished. But we have solved the problem of combining centralization with diffusion. Our great city is not a cancer which destroys vitality, but a vigorous heart that maintains a healthy circulation of the life-currents of the whole body politic. For every warehouse and palace that is reared in the city, scores of farms are reclaimed from the prairie and the forest; for every ship launched at our dock-yards, miles of road are pushed into remote regions, along which hamlets and villages spring up, vivified into being by the influences of the great city, which centralizes energy enough at a single point to create an outlet for the overflowing wealth and unlimited possibilities of forest, ake and prairie. Whatever its little drawbacks then, in the way of vices, New York, like the sun with its spots, is a great blessing; therefore, Let it grow.

☞ This "wicked but witty" epigram is from the French of La Mon:

The world, of fools has such a store,
That he who would not see an ass
Must bide at home, and bolt his door,
And break his looking-glass.

THE PHILANTHROPIST'S WORK.

The annual reports of the operations of our numerous Missionary Societies and Charitable Associations are generally laid before the public, by our daily and weekly periodicals, during the month of May. These documents, in most instances, contain a *resume* of what has been done by each society during the past year and an outline of what ought to be done during the ensuing year. Their effect on the public mind depends, not so much on their number and contents as on the temperament of the individuals who peruse them. Whatever may be their number or the character of their contents, the hopeful generally find in them causes of joy; the desponding, on the contrary, looking on the dark shades in the picture, lament the comparative smallness of the results of philanthropic effort and are almost driven to give up in despair the work of relieving the poor, teaching the ignorant, and of elevating and transforming the outcasts of society into christian men and women.

To correct these extremes,—to encourage the desponding and to check the over-sanguine and impulsive, it is necessary for those who read these annual reports, and especially for those engaged in works of benevolence to look beyond the limits of a single year and beyond the labors of a single society. The force of a single society is altogether insufficient to produce any deep, lasting extraordinary effect on the ignorance, destitution, suffering and crime of the lower classes in our large cities. Even the exertions of all the charitable associations of this city, during the past year, have not been crowned with any extraordinary success; there still lies before the benevolent such a fearful amount of misery, as might almost appal and sadden the hearts of the most hopeful. Poverty and wretchedness meet the eye in every street, and it is no exaggeration to say that almost every other roof, in particular sections of the city, covers a thief, a burglar, a murderer or criminal of some discription. Those who do nothing and contribute nothing towards the elevation of suffering humanity, still point to the sad condition of the lower strata of our city population, and sneer at the anniversary meetings, the speeches and labors of the clergy, at charitable societies, at the large salaries and comfortable, respectable situations of ministers and missionaries, at the scanty charity of the wealthy, and at their fashionable churches. And certainly, in reply to these sneers, the rich and benevolent have no reason to *boast* of their success during the past year. The labors of the good men and noble-hearted women of America have not been in proportion to their opportunities and ability.

The returns of our charitable associations for the past year will, however, show a considerable advance upon the contributions and efforts of any preceeding year. Christianity has been silently but unceasingly striking its roots deeper and deeper into the soil of humanity; it has been growing stronger and rising higher and extending its refreshing shade more widely over every class of society. Its history, during the present century, proves it to be as fresh and vigorous as in the days of its youth, eighteen hundred years ago.

Its silent, unspent force propels forward, slowly but surely, every philanthropic movement of the age. Directly or indirectly it keeps in motion all our missionary societies and charitable associations. Its progress in the past is the strongest visible evidence of the inherent vitality of our almost innumerable benevolent associations and the firmest foundation for our hopes of progress in the future. As citizens of a Christian country, we rejoice in the marked success which has followed already the philanthropic efforts of the past year, and we bid "God speed" to those engaged in them by whatever name they may be called, or whatever standard they may follow.

THE LITTLE NAPKIN.

Louis Napoleon has got all the mamas on his side, by the devotion he has exhibited for his baby, and their enthusiasm has lately been wrought up to the highest pitch by the manner in which the Emperor has determined "the little joker" shall be brought up. He is not to be bundled and swathed, and poked up in purple and fine linen and fed with a gold spoon, and constantly carried about in somebody's arms, and thus be made a sickly, effeminate little doll of. No! The Emperor has resolved that he shall eat just what and when he wishes; tumble over and bump his nose *ad libitum;* kick, and bite, and scratch, and yell, to distraction; and be brought up in the utmost possible state of rough-and-tumbleism. A wise man is Louis Napoleon. He knows that princes must take their chance with the rest of us now-a-days, and that only he who can *hold* power is permitted to retain it. So little Napkin is to be early put through a complete course of wringing out, that he may become accustomed and inured to the process by the time he has to face the "great unwashed," behind the barricades, on his own account.

A NAUGHTY SUBSCRIBER.—A subscriber writing to us begins his letter thus:—"Why the devil don't you send me my paper?" For some time we were at a loss to discover any meaning in the beginning of the question. At last we thought of parsing it. "Devil" is a common noun, singular number, objective case placed in opposition to, and explaining, the pronoun "me," according to the rule, *Words signifying the same person or thing agree in case.* Rather an unfortunate "case" for our correspondent.

BACK NUMBERS, containing Mr. Cobb's new Story complete, as far as published, can be obtained at our office; or they can be ordered through any newsdealer.

FRESH FERN LEAVES.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by R. BONNER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

ANNIVERSARY TIME.

MR. GOUGH AT THE OPERA HOUSE.

Funny, isn't it? Country ministers with their wives and daughters in the unhallowed precincts of an Opera House! I trust they crossed themselves on the threshold, by way of exorcising Beelzebub. Observe their furtive glances at the naked little dimplednesses perched upon yonder wooden pillars. How legibly is—Saints and angels! where are those children's trousers? written upon the elongated corners of their evangelical mouths. R-a-t-h-e-r different I confess from the Snagtown "meetin-house," with its slam-down seats, its swallow-nested roof, and its shirt-sleeved chorister; but, my strait-laced friends, if you strain at a harmless marble Cupid, how could you swallow an electric flesh-and-blood ballet-dancer, such as we are wont to see in this house? I have tried to educate myself up to do it, but may I be pinched this minute if I do not catch myself diligently perusing the play-bill, whenever they execute one of their astounding rotary *pas.* I can't stand it; and yet my friends, at the risk of being excommunicated, allow me to say, that I would rather stand a ballet-dancer's chance of getting to heaven, than that of many a vinegar-visaged saint of high repute in your churches.

But this is a digression. Just see those women seating themselves *on the stage.* Saucy as I am, I could not do that; nor, if I did, would I put my feet up on the rounds of a chair in front of me—and the audience. How patriarchal Solon Robinson looks, with his clear, calm face, and his long, snow-white beard. He is quite a picture. What a pity he ever burned his fingers with "Hot Corn." But let him throw the first stone who has never by one well-meant, but mistaken act of his life, called forth the regretful—"what a pity!" The river which never overflows its banks may never devastate, nor—does it ever freshen the distant and arid Sahara. Many a poor man has blessed, and will bless, the name of Solon Robinson; and many a hard-toiling woman, too, whom he has instructed how to procure the most nutriment for her starving children from an old bone or a couple of onions. Let those who make wry mouths at "Hot Corn" taste his "poor man's soup," and do justice to the active brain and philanthropic heart of its originator.

I used to think the New York Tribune, of which Solon is Agricultural Editor, a great institution, until I discovered two things: 1st. The number of able, talented, practical men employed in its getting up; 2ndly. That a *bull's head** is kept constantly seething in the machine boiler to impart a wholesome ferocity to its paragraphs!

Hush! here comes the speaker of the evening—John B. Gough, supported by Dr. Tyng—(good Dr. Tyng, who believes in preaching to dear little children, as well as to their fathers and mothers). John says, "Ladies and gentlemen" (not—*Gentlemen* and ladies, as do some ungallant orators). "Ladies and gentlemen, when the admission tickets are twenty-five cents I feel doubtful of giving you your money's worth; judge then how a fifty cent ticket embarrasses me." A very politic preface, John; but ere you had spoken five consecutive sentences, I knew it was mock-modesty. You know very well that no man understands better how to sway a crowd; you know that many an audience, who yawn through addresses that are squared, rounded, and plumb-ed by nicest rules of rhetoric, will sit spell-bound unconscious hours, and laugh and cry at *your* magnetic will. John, you are a good and a great institution, and right glad am I that the noble cause in which your eloquence is enlisted, has so pleasing and indomitable a defender.

But John—it is not all in *you.* Double-edged is the sword wielded in a *just* cause; and not a man, woman or child has listened to your burning words to-night who did not know and feel that you spoke God's truth.

Success to the Temperance cause, and all its apostles, both great and small; and above all, *never* let *woman's* lip baptise the bowl, which for aught she can tell may sepulcher her dearest hopes this side heaven. FANNY FERN.

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*We presume our contributor refers to the fact that a bullock's head is put occasionally into the boiler of a steam-engine to neutralise the corrosive substances in the water; though how Fanny found this out, as well as many other things she seems to know, we cannot tell.—ED. LEDGER.

A STANDING JOKE.

Mr. Punch, the London Charivari, has one standing joke, and only one. We suspect he has stolen it from the Circumlocution office. In defiance, however, of the law and the police, he boldly hangs out the stolen property at the end of every number, not like a "banner on the outward wall," but like a sign-board at his back-door. Read the inscription without breathing, winking or laughing:—"Printed by William Bradbury of No. 13 Upper Woburn Place, and Frederick Mullet Evans of No. 19 Queen's Road West, Regent's Park, both in the Parish of St. Pancras in the county of Middlesex, Printers, at their office in Lombard street, in the Precinct of Whitefriars, in the city of London, and Published by them at No. 85 Fleet street, in the Parish of St. Bride, in the city of London.—Saturday, April, 1856."

Certainly there are words enough in that sentence to enlighten a Hottentot, a Choctaw or any of the heathen in regard to the precise location of Punch's birth-place. But to read such a rigmarole from beginning to end requires the exercise of all the patience and perseverance of a ten-year-old Christian.

THE FILLIBUSTERS IN NICARAGUA.

Notwithstanding the unquestionable bravery and desperation of General Walker and his fillibuster companions, they seem to be getting into rather straitened and hazardous circumstances in Nicaragua. They are pressed hard on every side, are almost destitute of funds, but poorly supplied with provisions and ammunition, and by a miserable blunder on the part of their commander they have lost their military base of operations on the sea, so that, at the last accounts, even retreat was impossible, and no reinforcements could enter the country.

No doubt General Walker's hopes of speedily conquering Central America took root in the hazy romance which floats around the conquests of Cortez in Mexico and Pizarro in Peru. He should have remembered, however, that the people now to be conquered are more difficult to defeat than were the Aztecs and ancient Peruvians, and that his forces are less capable of carrying out such an enterprise than were the Spanish chivalry of the sixteenth century. Had Cortez been met with well-trained soldiers, armed with Minie rifles and trailing formidable parks of artillery, it is quite certain that not one of his band would have escaped destruction; nor could the Spaniards, had they not been animated and sustained by their religious fanaticism, have succeeded in bending the Aztecs to their yoke. Cruel and fiendish as those blood-stained old cavaliers seem to us, they were most devout men according to the usages of their time, who considered themselves chosen servants of God, and implicitly believed that every man of them who should fall fighting the infidels would at once be taken to heaven and rewarded by their Almighty Father's own hand. Such a belief as this, cherished in their fiery souls, and nerving their brawny and practiced sinews, could not but render them invincible against their ill-armed and pagan foes.

With the Fillibusters the case is far different. Their enemies are thoroughly armed and disciplined, and Walker has shown himself but indifferently qualified for the position of a military chieftain; still, in case he shall receive strong reinforcements and a plentiful supply of ammunition and provisions, his tenacity of purpose may yet enable him to overcome the obstacles which, at the last accounts, seemed to have paralyzed his operations.

BOGUS PATRIOTS.

Certain parties, who seem to be possessed of a vast amount of soap-buble patriotism, are trying to excite the warlike feelings of our people against England, because it has been discovered that the British Government has offered to sell two hundred old muskets to the Costa Ricans. Loud cries of "English interference," and "British aggression," are raised; and the Administration at Washington is called upon to "resent this insult to the American flag."

We are heartily sick of this sort of nonsense; and, if we are not much mistaken, the country is sick of it likewise. This eternal blubbering about the star-spangled banner, and such constant hawking at the American eagle, have become thoroughly disgusting. We protest against such continued prostitution of our country's flag. It has been used long enough by scheming politicians as an envelope in which to wrap up and conceal from public scrutiny their selfish designs. Whenever a demagogue does not know what else to do, or what next to say—when his pond of sophistry and falsehood has run out and he is left sticking fast in the mud, he wraps himself in the star-spangled banner and shrieks at the American eagle. By this means he generally contrives to frighten a parcel of timid old women—of both sexes—some of whom have seats in our national councils, who gravely shake their heads and warn the country "to prepare for a mighty struggle," else the American eagle will not have where to roost.

We are glad that the Secretary of State is too clear-sighted a statesman to be moved by any such clamor, or spread-eagle demonstrations, and that he will prevent these boisterous demagogues from hurting anybody but themselves.

AN UNFORGIVING HUSBAND.

BOSTON, April 24th, 1856.

MR. LEDGER:—Will you please state your opinion of a man, the father of a young family, who has lived happily with his wife, (who is a good and faithful mother and wife,) for many years, and who, for a trifling act of hers, which was not in the least wrong, but with which he was displeased, refused to live with her, and has not done so for a year; and who, although she has acknowledged to him that she was hasty in what she said, and was sorry that she said it, still refuses to live with her again, and is not willing to provide for her, although he is in a good business, and is considered by many, as a *gentleman?* Can she do any more? What ought she to do?

VIRGINIA.

It is foreign to our purpose to pass unqualified judgment upon specific and individual cases, of whatever nature, inasmuch as we can not be supposed to be in possession of *all* the facts. If "Virginia" has given us a perfectly impartial statement of the case she has presented, the husband referred to must be a most obdurate and unforgiving monster. It ill becomes a man, under any circumstances, to treat his wife and the mother of his children with harshness and severity; and such perverseness of temper as that spoken of by "Virginia" is among the most odious traits of character which it is possible for a human being to exhibit.

THE Camden and Amboy Railroad Company have given another indication of their character by refusing to pay the bills of the surgeons who attended upon the victims of the "slaughter" on that road in August last.

A JOKE is sometimes a serious matter. A gentleman of this city was locked in a room and kept there an hour against his wishes "just for the fun of the thing," recently recovered on a suit for false imprisonment, $175 and costs of those who confined him.

CURRENT ITEMS.

A SECT of Spiritualists have sprung up in Bohemia, who are represented as having astounding revelations from Martin Luther, John Huss, and other Protestant celebrities. Among other things, it has been revealed that the Emperors of Russia, France and Austria, and the King of Prussia, should be killed by hook or by crook. The Government is about to put down the mediums.

WHEN the Pacific steamer CORTEZ last touched at San Juan del Sur, four of General Walker's men went on board and informed the captain that they had been sent to seize it; whereupon the Captain sent them into the cabin to take a glass of champaigne, slipped his cables and carried them to sea.

IN a recent debate in the U. S. Senate, Mr. Clay of Alabama said he would have nothing more to say to Mr. Hale of New Hampshire who was always ready to eat his own words. Mr. Hale retorted, that if he should eat his own words he would have a much more pleasant repast than would the Senator from Alabama in case he should eat *his.*

A WEALTHY man in Brooklyn when moving recently, being too stingy to hire a carriage for his family, perched his children on a load of furniture, whence they were precipitated to the pavement and seriously injured. The doctor's bill will amount to ten times the carriage hire.

A MAN named Boyd, living in Virginia, recently lost four children in two days, his house and barns burned down the following day, and his last remaining child, which was at the point of death, had no place whereon to die.

IT is proposed by many Members of Congress that the U. S. Government shall take possession of Panama and annex it, in order to prevent further outrages upon California passengers.

THE English Government is said to be preparing to take part with the Central Americans for the purpose of expelling the Filibusters.

AN English journal announces the astonishing fact that pasteboard is now being made in that country from beet roots.

WIT AND HUMOR.

A FRENCHMAN in translating Shakspeare, came to the line in Othello, where the jealous Moor, his rage rising beyond his control, bursts out with, "Sir, she can turn and turn, go on and turn," and knowing only one cause for such quick and constant turning, he translated the line, "*Monsieur, she can waltz like an angel!*"

BEFORE leaving Troy, King Menelaus offered his daughter as a victim to the gods, in order to win propitious breezes for the voyage home. We are reminded of this in modern society, when we hear of some match-making parent sacrificing his daughter to "raise the wind."

AN old hotel keeper in Washington once posted on his dining-room door, the following notice: Members of Congress will go to the table first, and then the *gentlemen.* Rowdies and blackguards must not mix with the Congressmen, as it is hard to tell one from t'other."

LORD Standford told Moore that Lady Caroline Lamb, in a moment of passion, had knocked down one of her pages with a stool,—"Well," said the poet, "it is nothing uncommon for a literary lady to *double down a page.*"

"IF," said Dr. Johnson, "I had no duties to perform and no reference to futurity, I would spend my life in driving briskly in a post-chaise with a pretty woman."

"MAST-HEAD, ahoy!" hailed the Captain of a clipper. "Aye, aye, sir," was the reply. "Do you see a light?" "Yes, sir." "What light?" "Daylight, sir."

"PAPA have guns got legs?" "No." "How do they kick then?" "With their breeches, my son."

LONDON rain is described by a French writer as "tallow melted in water and perfectly black."

LITERARY ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

CONCORD, (Ga.) April 22, 1856.

MR LEDGER:—I am induced by the correct answers, which you have given your various correspondents, to the knotty questions propounded for solution, to submit the following query, requesting a speedy answer thereto. Suppose a person who is conversant in the first principles of an English education—that is in Geography, Grammar and Arithmetic—with a smattering of Latin and Greek, being desirous of enlarging his store of knowledge, and seeing many books, which he thinks may be necessary for him to become acquainted with, but is ignorant of the kind that is *really* necessary for the pursuits of life—now should he study every work which is said to be valuable in order that this desirable result may be obtained?—if not, please state those books which you would recommend, and much oblige,

JUVENIS.

In a case such as "Juvenis" supposes, a man would do well to study and read as much as possible. *What* he should read, would of course depend upon what his business or profession was to be. If he simply wishes to accomplish himself in literature, he can do so by reading the Bible, Homer, Virgil, Shakspeare, Milton, Pope, Addison, Byron, Burns, Carlyle, Dickens and the New York Ledger. These, with other current writings which a man is impelled by stress of the *present* to read as he goes along, would nourish a mind into a state of much vigor, keenness and refinement.

ALDERMANIC SWINDLING.

New York Aldermen are ingenious swindlers. Monroe Edwards died too soon. He should have lived until these latter days. The latest "dodge" resorted to in that respectable body, for defrauding the city, is this, namely: A contract is advertised to be let to the lowest bidder. A bid is put in for, say $40,000, which is just about what should be paid for the job. The next lowest bid is perhaps $90,000. When the time for signing the contract comes, the forty-thousand-dollar man does not appear, nor can he be found; and the Board passes a resolution that as he is not ready to perfect the contract, that they will take up the next lowest bid and enter into a contract with its maker. And so, ninety thousand dollars are paid for work which a responsible party would have done for less than half that sum—had he not been liberally paid to stay away and give the Aldermen a chance to pocket the extra fifty thousand.

MY LOVE.

Is she not passing fair,
  She whom I love so well?
On earth, in sea or air,
  Where may her equal dwell?
Oh! tell me, ye who dare
  To brave her beauty's spell,
Is she not passing fair,
  She whom I love so well?

Whether she speak or sing,
  Be lively or serene,
Alike in everything,
  Is she not beauty's queen?
Then let the world declare,
  Let all who see her tell,
That she is passing fair,
  She whom I love so well.

NORMA DANTON;

OR THE

ORPHAN OF THE LIGHTHOUSE

A TALE OF FRAUD AND REVENGE.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Ethel Danton was not a whit behind the fashionable tourist of the day, during his travels. He indulged freely in all the little conveniences for enjoyment which Paris affords sojourners, either in a medium or a dissipated ratio. He lavished his wealth freely for selfish gratification, undisturbed by a thought of the past or future, and was always generous to those who contributed to his pleasures—which was a slight point of redemption in his character in the estimation of some.

Elegant and wealthy, the society of the young American was courted by those in like circumstances, and he consequently saw the best of all that was worth seeing in the several foreign courts he visited. His claims to attention once made known, he was received with distinction wherever he went, and beautiful eyes flashed sweet replies to his sometimes bold questionings. Several tender entanglements resulted from this social adulation—mere surface loves; but they subsided, and left no serious consequences more than the ripple leaves upon the bosom of the lake accustomed to the ruffling of the sportive breeze which stoops to kiss it as it flows. But all sooner or later meet their fate, and Ethel Danton at last met his.

It seemed that he said in effect "How am I answerable for my heart? It is my master, and is free with me; as fixed by fate as a star that moves, yet moves only on a certain course, in certain modes. Its liberties are laws, its laws tyrannic;" and so it was to him.

One evening at a masked ball, a new sensation assailed him in the shape of a graceful partner in a sable domino. There was something in her touch and motion so fresh and brilliant that he, perforce, yielded himself a conquest to her invisible charms; for the domino and jealous mask concealed much, leaving much to be guessed at of the superb proportions of a figure a little above the common height; the perfect arms and hands were now and then revealed by the floating away of the wide winglike sleeves. An occasional glance from eyes whose brilliance sent the hot arrows of passion shooting through the soul of the susceptible Ethel, was the only point for imagination to pitch upon to make assurance doubly strong, as vouchers of entire perfectibility.

The features of that face he might not yet behold. To all his appeals the lady gave negations in the softest Italian. He questioned her of her country, emboldened by the amiability of her manners, as he supported her buoyant form in his arms through the delightful mazes of a foreign dance.

She replied evasively "from the far north."

"Nay," said Ethel, "those dark curls bespeak you rather a daughter of the sun-kissed south. Grant me the favor (I must be importunate) to lay aside your mask, and let me bask in the full influence of the rapture with which your presence inspires me." He pressed for the hundredth time the lovely hand, as he spoke.

It was hastily withdrawn, and the mask glided away; and joining another a few steps distant from which she had received and answered a given signal which Ethel did not observe, the two precipitately retreated from the room. Ethel attempted to follow, but soon lost sight of them in the confusion of numbers and the various detentions to which all are liable, especially if seeming to avoid the mischief-loving maskers.

At length, wearied out and disappointed from his unsuccessful search, he seated himself before an open balcony in a retired part of the spacious ball-room, and bared his brow to the cool night air. He was surprised by a mask in the same black domino, or one so nearly similar the difference was not perceptible.

Before he had time to resume his disguise, the mask accosted him familiarly in the same soft Italian, and it seemed like the same voice, yet Ethel thought he detected a slight variety in the tone, which caused him to doubt the identity of the fair challenger, for, like a gallant gentleman as he was, he allowed the benefit of a doubt had it existed even so strongly in his mind, which it did not, although he was not prepared to believe this the *bona fide* charmer of the dance.

Nevertheless she might be fair, and all who wore the feminine garb were acceptable to the pleasure-loving Ethel; so he received the advances of the pretty deceiver, as he believed she was, more than half way, consoling himself with the thought that she might be the bearer of some word or missive from his recent truant partner.

"You are weary, signor, and unquiet; does disappointment always make you sullen?"

"How know you that I have been disappointed?" he inquired.

"Perhaps by the gloom upon your brow; perhaps by previous acquaintance with your expressed sentiments," she replied; "but, jesting aside, you do not know me, signor, under this disguise, yet we have often met before."

"Does she say that to whet my curiosity?" inquired Ethel of his thoughts. He replied, aloud: "Love makes me tremulously doubtful."

"Ah! signor, love should never doubt; true love should be capable of detecting the beloved through all disguises."

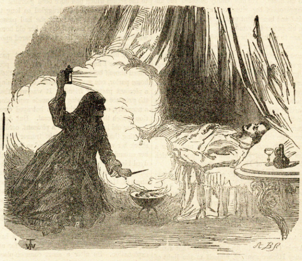
"So short our interviews I have scarce learned to know the tones of your voice, and you hide your face from me now."

"Do you think you will know my voice when next you hear it?" she asked, a little archly.

"I can never mistake its lightest cadence again, signora!" replied Ethel.

"Then to-morrow I may surprise you. No more now; don't seem to notice me!" she whispered imploringly, as some one approached.

She turned from him, and presently he saw her retire with another mask in black domino so precisely like hers, that he could not tell which was which. His fevered fancy was all on fire. He tried pursuit, but was again baffled in the attempt to discover his mantled divinity.



THE LADY IN THE BLACK DOMINO PREPARING FOR ETHEL DANTON'S ASSASSINATION.

Disgusted and piqued with his ill success, he returned to his hotel and retired to his private apartment. He discovered, immediately he entered it, that some one had visited it during his absence, although himself retained the key; but on his dressing table there lay a note most delicately perfumed, with his address upon the envelope. It was evidently freshly written, for the ink was scarcely dry. Its contents puzzled him.

"I told you I might surprise you to-morrow. About the hour of noon be in this chamber; see that your doors are fast; be alone, and expect STELLA."

"See that your doors are fast; be alone, and expect Stella," he slowly repeated. "Upon my word, the case is getting decidedly interesting; the charming mask will surely be my guest, but which of them is now the question. No matter, the right one will be here no doubt. I strongly suspect one fallen angel employs the other to lay the foundations of her tender plans, herself, most like, too high in rank to venture without a preconcerted prelude harmoniously arranged by an accomplished attendant. I shall not thwart you, *ma bellissima*. I glory in excitement, and this is *plus* in its character. But how, in the name of all the gods, does she gain access to my chamber? Well, I will not quarrel with her on that score; let it be till we come to a settlement. Venus! Bacchus! Mars! It is your Italian signora who understands the art of keeping expectation on tiptoe till bliss is fanned to exstacy while trembling on the verge of possibilities. I'll bathe, and then to rest; for to-morrow the moon will sleep in the sea, and pleasure will beat high tide on the shores of my world."

Ethel slept, but the dark genii of the brooding spirits of mischief wove their dire fancies through the slumberers sumptuous dreams!

At the hour of noon, next day, "punctual as lovers to the minute sworn," the doors were fast and Ethel was alone, and he said, as he took a seat to await his expected visitant, "If she be of mortal mould she cannot enter here without asking permission of me."

The words had scarcely passed his lips, when from the upper side of the room, which was in a wing of the main building, he heard the rustling of a lady's robes, and the black domino stood before him.

Astonishment left him silent for a moment, but it was quickly mastered by his gallantry.

After handing his guest to a seat, his next request was that he might be permitted to remove the envious mask. She consented, but retained the rest of her disguise. It was a lady of "night-hued" hair; her flashing eyes were bent on him with a curious intensity, and did not droop beneath his ardent gaze.

At length she spoke: "My moments with you now are short. I have only come to prepare you for another interview."

"Sweet condescension. Name but the hour and I am but too happy to be the slave of such beauty."

"Signor," said the lady, "to say I love would be needless since my motives in visiting you could be construed in no other way, but that is not all. I have something to confide to you which requires the greatest secrecy. There is danger about my steps. I am constantly watched, and were my visit here to transpire, my inevitable disgrace—perhaps death—would be the consequence. You are young, rich, and unencumbered; it is without vanity, I say of myself, I am beautiful enough to command your loyalty, for a time at least, and I also frankly confess that I am somewhat selfish in thus claiming your protection and accepting the love I discovered you felt for me from the moment of our meeting. It is absolutely necessary that I should quit the country, and I would go in your company."

She rose to her feet, listening, as a sound from without reached her ears. "My minutes are counted; be here at twelve this evening. I will explain more fully then. Take all precaution to avoid detection; let your room be darkened without the possibility of any presence but mine and yours within it. Do not seek to penetrate the mode of entrance and exit of which I have chosen to avail myself. If you prize my love beware!" and like a shadow she disappeared, leaving Ethel astonished and bewildered by her singular harangue.

His vanity was a little piqued, his self-love a good deal disturbed, but there was nothing for it but to await her next visit.

"The lady has me fairly in her power," said Ethel, as he soliloquised on the recent scene. "She can come to me at all hours and depart when she likes, as I find, without my permission; but by Heaven she is a perfect Juno. I am more in love than ever with the fascinating being, but am anxious for the *denouement*. These foreign entanglements are teaching me something I never learned at home—patience. So it seems she would claim my protection. She shall have it, at least until I am tired of her, if I ever can tire of such perfection. She seems to have embodied everything that belongs to all the rest of womankind. How my blood burns for our next interview."

Ethel obeyed to the letter the injunctions of his fair innamorata. With all the precautions she had advised, at the hour of twelve he was duly ready to receive her.

She did not come. Expectation merged into impatience. He threw himself on a couch which stood directly opposite a window, facing another wing of the building, with windows to match. The curtain of his he had neglected to drop; a thought came over him that he would do so, but before he had time to act upon it that silken rustling that preceeded her coming in the morning stayed him. His heart leaped impetuously as she approached the spot where he sat, reaching out her hand as if to feel her way safely through the darkness which to him was clearer from longer familiarity. He snatched and imprisoned the soft, plump precedent, and pressed it with impassioned earnestness to his lips.

At that instant a bright light shown from a window in the wing of the opposite building, and the rays fell full upon the face and form of the lady standing beside him.

Ethel dropped the hand he held as if a serpent stung him, for with that flash of light the face assumed a fierce, outraged, demoniac look, and she hissed through her shut teeth, "Treacherous hypocrite!"

More than that, it was not the face of Stella. It was one whom Ethel had often seen at the grand court fetes—one high in rank among the noblesse of the land, one whom he had thought far beyond the breath of common mortals, and there she was unmasked before him.

She saw she was discovered, she thought betrayed by him. She knew in that brief instant that his quick eye had compassed her design.

It was as he had guessed at first; that other Stella was but the "invirato" sent out to reconnoitre. She was the purveyor of her princely mistress' dainty appetite, the real Stella now shone out of her sphere in that inauspicious ray. The unwelcome light went out or was removed, and she too, disappeared simultaneously from the presence of the wondering Ethel. For a few moments he sat in profound silence, listening for her returning steps; they came not. The peculiarity of the circumstance surprised him out of any other emotion. He relighted the lamp, and then with an undefined impulse examined carefully every part of the tapestry on that side of the room by which the two masks had entered on their separate errands, endeavoring to discover the secret door, but in vain; finally giving up the search he drew his escritoire forward and sat down to write a light and fanciful sketch of the occurrences and emotions of the last twenty-four hours, which seemed more like a figment of a dreamer's brain than like realities, concluding with some spirited badinage on his duplicate disappointment. He took his usual draught of wine to induce sleep and retired to his couch, and in a little time was wandering in dream-land.

All was silent within the chamber when the secret panel again slid slowly back, and a dark figure bent through the opening, listening cautiously. The deep, regular breathing of the sleeping man apparently reassured and determined the movements of the nocturnal rambler. Her first step was to let fall the heavy curtain and drape it closely before the treacherous window. Taking from under the sleeve of her domino a small, dark lanthern, she proceeded to place near the couch a chafing dish, into which she poured some light liquid. Then firing the burner under it, she hastily quitted the chamber and closed the secret door.

All was again quiet, but the shadow of another noiseles actor was busy in the scene. The liquid bubbled as the heat reached it, and a light vapor arose therefrom, and the sleeper's breathings grew shorter and shorter, then changed to irregular gaspings; a shudder ran through the form so clearly defined under the white coverings, and then the heart was still forever—paralyzed by a floating mist generated by the action of heat applied to something which had no name, which left no trace of its deadly properties.

But that grim shadow reigned triumphant now, where but one little hour ago stood Ethel Danton, his pulses bounding with passionate life, and with the motive power of youth and health.

Once more, and for the last time, the secret panel was unclosed; once more, and for the last time, the same dark figure stole through it; but now a hesitating awe marked the movements of those little, shoeless feet, as they trod the matted floor. By the dim fading light, she gazed down on the face of her victim, which now she need not fear, for it could not waken.

"Life is sweet," whispered the beautiful fiend; "I but preserved myself by destroying thee, and thou hast passed without tasting the terrors of death; painless and fearless was thy passage across the dark river. God rest thy soul."

The sudden decease of the young American originated some considerable speculation among his acquaintances. The American Ambassador was apprized of the fact, and all due respect was paid the heir of the Dantons.

There was nothing to arouse suspicion as to the cause of his death. A stranger guest in the city of the dead on that fair foreign shore, in his lonely grave we wlll leave him.

Mr. and Mrs. Danton are on their way to meet their son, and can only learn the sad intelligence when they reach Italy, whither they were coming, impelled by the same strong heart-yearning, the desire of beholding both their children again; for, notwithstanding the unbelief in glamour and witchcraft which they try to teach each other, a hope-light by fits and starts still gleams above the darkling horizon, suggesting vague dreams and impossible results, luring them with palpable deceits as unsatisfying as the *mirage* of the desert to the thirsty traveler.

Norma was with them, and a party of friends—the Marshalls, mother and son; also Mr. and Mrs. Newbold accompanied them on their trans-Atlantic tour.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Cris and the Burker quarreled over the diamonds, but made a deceptive truce the very day the Dantons left the country. The faithful Azubah kept them apprized of the safe moment to venture a final disposal of their troublesome property.

The Burker had evinced a disposition to cheat, as his nature must necessarily induce him to do. Cris saw through it, skillful as it was, and his cold eye glittered again as a silent vow of speedy revenge was registered within his own heart; and the diamonds glittered too, in their safe concealment, pure and brilliant as heaven's dews on the morning flower. Is there thought in the sparkle of light that a gem holds in its bright bosom? Is a spirit of power imprisoned in each, strong to guard and mighty to work? Why not? All purity is power.

The thieves wrangled, and the brilliants sparkled up at them, seeming to shoot pointed rays which made those wretches speak fierce words to each other. Bold, accursed, wrangling, knavish thoughts were engendered within their guilt-gnarled souls, as the quick vibrating fires from those rare stones blazed on them. The ruffians, by artful managing, seeking to outwit each the other, nursed in secret a dark plan for getting rid of the other and constituting himself sole legatee of the enviable horde.

Think of the schemes a pair of such brains might concoct, intensified as was each by years of crime.

Madame St. Jude was flourishing in the populous city of New York, with her magnetized and clairvoyant neophyte. She did not miss from the ebony casket the little flask containing a potent narcotic. Cris had it in his possession, for a purpose worthy to be disclosed.

He had watched the malignant eyes of the Burker, and knew, with the ready wit of villainy, that his plan, let it be what it might, was well-matured and soon to be put in execution. He feared a hug from Lady Julia in some unguarded moment, but wary and watchful, without seeming to be so, he waited preparedly the ripening of the evil fruit.

"Well, old cove," said Cris, with assumed friendliness to Chaffer, "the rightful owners of these little sparklers are gone at last—cleared the coop—quit the country; and I think we might venture to dispose of our booty now. Come, man, cheerily; there shan't be any more bad blood between us. I'll be bound there shan't. Let by-gones be by-gones, there's my hand."

Chaffer took it greedily, with a peculiar leer in his cunning eyes, that met askance the cold, icy, impenetrable orbs of Cris.

"Why, man, what ails you? You're shaky. Let's take a drink."

"It ain't so," replied Chaffer doggedly, "but have the liquor all the same."

Chaffer had become alarmingly fond of the bottle, and as he incautiously swallowed glass after glass of the drugged liquor, Cris grew sure and more sure of his prey, and coolly calculated the results accruing from a speedy disposal of Chaffer; who became more good-humored and garrulous as the fumes of the liquor penetrated his brain. He could carry off an immense quantity without losing his presence of mind, but on this particular occasion he was unwittingly tampering with another principle which was not so easily managed, which in its more but sure operation must eventually leave him at the mercy of his bitterest foe, whose successful toils were fast ensnaring him.

It was no part of the policy of Cris to be seen much in the company of his villain victim before his final disappearance; therefore, when the drug began to operate, he insinuatingly beguiled Chaffer to ride with him to a remote district that he might without suspicion consummate his nefarious project.

Madame St. Jude was suddenly missed from the quarter in which she had been located, and we find her again in the old brown cottage by the sea-side, disencumbered of the trappings of her profession. What a strange, wild picture this change from the triumphant prophetess to the subdued and sorrow-stricken woman. She sat on the floor, her hair unbound and falling around her like a pall, her bloodless hands clasping her knees almost with the rigidity of death; her teeth were set hard, and the white compressed lips emitted no sound; but there was a flush on the brow and a fixedness of thought in the eye, as though she recognized some awful destiny hovering over her head, which no human effort might avert.

May crept like a frightened child to her mistress's side, for she had learned to love the stern, cold priestess of magnetism, and sought to soothe her now by smoothing with her small, white hands the tangled masses of her sloe-black hair. The woman seemed for a time unconscious of her blandishments; then, with a sudden start, an eager thought flashed across her face, and she fixed her keen gaze on the maiden, made a few passes from her head downward, and the girl, obedient to the will of her positive companion, dropped her hands passively in her lap, the snowy lids closed over the mild, blue orbs, and the spirit to all intents and purposes deserted the tenement of clay, though the voice slowly disintegrated to the listener's ears what the ordinary vision saw not, what that cold, senseless clay could not feel. The voice sounded hollow and distant, as if coming from afar, and to the mental searching questions of the seeker these were the replies delivered in that monotonous chilled, sepulchral tone, so freezing to the heart of the intelligent listener.

"Yes, the night is dark, so dark" (and the spirit seemed groping to express it;) "the two men are staggering; one is intoxicated and the other holds him up till they come to a pit, in that lonely place; there is a pool of stagnant water in the bottom of it. The tall man unclasps a knife"—she don't like to look.

The clairvoyant hesitated, but an impatient gesture from the willer forced her to continue, and in the same passionless voice she proceeded to paint the horid scene. "He knocks the short man down, then drags him to the brink of the pit, unclasps a knife and deliberately severs his head from his body. The head falls with an awful plunge into the stagnant water, and the displaced slime closes above it forever."

"Why does he not pitch the body after it?"

"Oh! he is so sickened by the smell of the blood, that he leaves his work half done. The earth is broken where he stands, and he heaps it hurridly over the headless trunk, and makes directly from the spot."

"That is the *has been*; now tell me the *will be*," gasped the wretched wife. She still held in the powerful leash of her will May's shrinking spirit. "Go and see what he next does," said Azubah with intense earnestness.

"He goes to that part of the city where the diamonds are; disguises himself with a false beard; changes his dress and sallies out to barter the gems for gold. Part of them he sells. One is following him who he does not see."

It is the shadow of justice on the track of its defyer. One who is in the pay of that hunter of his footsteps offers him the full worth of his concealed treasure, so cautiously guarded that no other eye has seen the whole set since the fierce glance of the murdered man gorged themselves miser like on their anger chaffing brilliancy.

She sees how the evil grew through the desire of gain till it became a monster mania, strangling life for its sustenance.

"Go on," said the half frantic woman.

"I see him again," pursued the clairvoyant; "he has been tracked and hunted till suspicion is confirmed. It is dark everywhere. He is in a jail—so miserable—another is speaking with him. He says he did not do the murder, but she knows better for she saw him do it—horrid wretch."

The magnetiser bit her lips fiercely.

"He is led out with gyves upon his hands. He is transferred to a lighter place. She sees a great many people; it is a court. He still asserts his innocence. He is remanded to jail till another day of trial. By a fearful array of circumstances the murder is brought home to him beyond a doubt. No escape; he is doomed! He strangles himself in his dungeon, but the rope fails him; he drinks from a flask some deadly drug, but awakes to renewed horrors from its positive futility. A woman goes to visit him. She would save him from the hangman; she bids him farewell, and at the instant slips a sharp instrument into his hand."

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

A MOTHER'S LOVE.

BY MRS. HENRIETTA LEGGETT.

"A mother's love!" That hallowed word—
  Ah! who can feel its depths?
None but a mother;—for the loved,
  How she has prayed and wept!
'Twere vain for mortal eye to scan
  The vast ethereal space,
And yet, as vain for man to strive
  A mother's love to efface.

Her affection's fountain knows no change,
  Its tide will have no ebb,
It still flows on when the dark grave,
  Enshrouds the lovely dead;
It has no semblance on the earth,
  In its exhaustless tone,
It knows no change, though it may live
  Without a fond return.

What are her duties? Oft that thought,
  Must fill her yearning breast,
While training the immortal souls,
  For an eternal rest;
She has the caskets that contain,
  The gems of purest ray—
The soul, with its undying worth,
  That cannot know decay.

She may increase in brilliancy,
  The diamond's watery hue,
And fill the youthful mind with truths,
  "Distilled as early dew;"
A precious pearl, to purify,
  The dross, to purge away,
A gem to deck the Saviour's crown,
  In Heaven's eternal day.

Her duties are to discipline,
  The fervent hearts in love,
With ardent faith, and zealous prayer,
  To guide their thoughts above.
Let holy truths, on youthful minds,
  Indelably be riven;
That they through every change may find,
  Their home of rest is Heaven.

HUDSON, N. Y.

THE LONG ENGAGEMENT.

BY MRS. MARY C. VAUGHAN.

A few mornings since my young friend, Ellen Gardner, came to pass a few hours with me. She is a very intimate friend of mine, and often comes thus unceremoniously, with a bit of fancy work in her hands, which grows under her nimble fingers as she chats with me. Ellen is lonely and a little sad at times, for her lover is in California and has twice delayed the period fixed for his return. On this morning she was unusually silent, and her attention seemed fixed upon one of those interminable pieces of crochet-work over which ladies contrive to wear away so much valuable time. I was watching her, though apparently busied in the homelier occupation of darning a wee pair of crimson stockings for my "youngest hope." I knew that some unusual cloud rested upon her bright, young spirit, and I was equally certain that I would soon know what it was if I only preserved a "discreet silence."

"Kate," said Ellen, at last, "do you believe in long engagements?"

The secret was out. Ellen was thinking of the long years of "hope deferred" and all its attendant heart-sickness, through which she had passed since first she laid her hand in George Murray's and promised to become his wife whenever he was ready to claim her. Should I be serious and sympathetic, I asked myself, or merry and unconscious. The latter seemed best, and so I answered:

"What a strange question, Ellen, if you consider that one's actions should be taken as exponents of one's belief. I was married to Mr. Constant just four months from our first introduction. It was the morning of the Fourth of July, that I first saw him, and we were decking our Town Hall with flowers for the "celebration." I remember that I was arranging boquets for the vases which were to be placed upon the table in front of the orator, when some one said, "Miss Lane, Mr. Constant," and I turned round to receive his bow. He held in his hand a beautiful moss-rose-bud which, before our conversation about boquets and flowers in general, was finished, had been transferred to my hair. It was a clear case of love at first sight. But though we 'married in haste' I have never, yet, found 'leisure' to repent. Robert is constant by nature as well as by name."

"But, dear Kate," she answered, and I saw that seriousness was the order of the day, "do you think you would ever have been so happy if your marriage had been deferred, perhaps for years, if you had endured separation and the misunderstandings occasioned by lost letters and misinterpreted ones, and if you had seen the freshness and elasticity of youth fading and dying through weary months of waiting?"

"Indeed, my dear, I cannot say how I should have endured such an ordeal. I believe there are women who would come out of it triumphantly, having grown stronger by all their trials. But only inherently strong and enduring natures could do so. And, since you will have a serious answer, I will tell you that I do not approve of long engagements. It is said that change is written on all things of this earth, even on the manifestations of the soul while it dwells here. I know that circumstances, and surroundings, and culture cause a change in the nature of our likes and dislikes, and in our appreciation of their objects. For instance, there are persons whom I once, and not very long ago either, looked upon with a sort of reverence, so very superior to the masses did they seem. And now these persons impress me, when I chance to meet them, as very commonplace people. Guy Ross, with whom I fancied myself very much in love, when I was sixteen, now that I am six and twenty has become my aversion; for I see that all his simpering sentimentality is but the varnish with which he strives to hide a coarse and sensual selfishness."

"But, Kate, what you have been saying would be an argument against marrying at all, would it not?"

"No, Ellen, it would only prove that we should choose well and wisely, and then endeavor to keep pace with each other, and adapt ourselves each to the other's changes. But I did not intend to argue, or sermonize, Ellen. I will only say that there are happier careers for woman than she can find in an unsuitable marriage. And without being suspected of leaning to any of the modern so-called social reforms, for which you know, as a happy and fully occupied wife and mother, I have no proclivities, you will let me say that no woman need to subject herself to the miseries of a long engagement, or if disappointed in the issue of one, yield to despondency. And now let me tell you a little story which just illustrates my point."

Jane Ross, the sister of my old lover, Guy, was a very lonely, retiring girl. It was said that she resembled her father, a quiet, but gifted man, who died young, of a decline; while Guy was like his coarse, bustling mother, only that he overlaid the innate vulgarity, derived from her, by his silly affectation of deep feeling. Jane was not happy at home, for she found no congeniality of thought or sentiment there. But hers was a loving nature, continually reaching out its fibres and striving to twine them about some satisfying object, though she was so retiring that few appreciated her sterling worth. Even those who were at first attracted by her beauty, were apt to conclude, prematurely, from her quiet manner, that she was not worth the trouble it cost to become acquainted with her.

Jane had known Horace Manners all her life. When we were children together, at school, he was her play-fellow, assistant and champion. He always carried her basket and books, in winter trod a path for her in the snow, and in summer cut the greenest boughs to make her baby-house, under the old elm trees upon the school-house green.

We used to call her Horace Manners's little wife, even then, and I don't suppose anybody was in the least surprised when it was announced that a real engagement of marriage existed between them. Jane was just eighteen when this took place, and Horace twenty-one—so young, both of them, the gossips said, as to make it prudent to wait.

Wait they must have done, at any rate, for Horace had expended upon his education all his little patrimony. He had just graduated from an Eastern college, and on coming home had commenced the study of law. Therefore, necessarily, some years must elapse before he could hope to realize, from his chosen profession, an income large enough to enable him to marry. Everybody knew Jane Ross had nothing, for her father had left all to his wife, and Jane and Guy were entirely dependant upon her. So, unless Jane chose according to her mother's taste she would receive little from her, and Horace Manners was her *bete noir*.

Thus it was likely that Jane's engagement would be a long one, and she, as she did all things, resigned herself to it quietly, and no one would have dreamed that her wishes had not been entirely met in the arrangement.

Several years passed on. The lovers residing in the same village, met almost, if not quite, daily, until Horace had completed his studies and had been admitted at the bar. For several months after this period he continued to reside in S., and a bright looking sign beside the door of a white, green-shuttered building on Main street announced the office of Horace Manners, Attorney at Law. But visitors were more plenty at Manners's office than business, and none of the loungers, who daily assembled there, brought business. It seemed probable that the consummation of their engagement would still be delayed indefinitely, and again Jane resigned herself with patience to what seemed inevitable. Horace, for his part, seemed very well satisfied. True he had spasmodic attacks of grumbling at his unpromising fortunes, when he would call himself the unluckiest fellow alive, and talk, lugubriously, about the unkindness of fate, but he seemed only to think of himself, except on the rare occasions when he found traces of tears upon Jane's placid face. He knew perfectly well the unpleasantness and uncongeniality of her home, but he did not seem even to realize it. He was impatient to secure an income that he might bring her to his home, not for her sake but for his own. Life was full to him. He had many and varied pleasures, from which Jane was debarred. But I believe he seldom, if ever, thought how her youth, in its freshness and beauty, was wearing away in this weary, weary waiting.

About the time at which Horace opened his office, a very dashing young lady made her appearance in the village. She was the niece of Judge Thorn with whom Manners had read law, and whose house had been his home during student-days. Though Horace no longer lived at Judge Thorn's, his long residence had made him a familiar visitor, and he was the first to make the acquaintance of Miss Annie Thorn.

I do not know that any one was surprised, even in our gossipping little village, when Horace Manners was seen almost daily promenading the streets of S. with Miss Thorn, or lounging at the Judge's parlor windows with her, or listening to her fine performance upon the harp she had brought with her—the first harp ever heard in S. Certainly Jane was not in the least surprised. She had never felt the pangs of jealousy, she had never attempted to keep Horace entirely to herself, and she was too meek, and had too little self-appreciation, to be exacting of attention. So she looked on, with every outward appearance of calmness, while Horace walked, and rode, and practised duets with Miss Thorn; sometimes in her company, but oftener while she sat alone in her uncongenial home. Poor girl, she was very well content to give up society, because Horace did not like to see her receive attention from any other than himself, and she never thought of a like renunciation on his part, though his devotion to Miss Thorn condemned her to many an hour of loneliness.

Soon after Miss Thorn's arrival in S., an uncle of Jane's came to visit the family, and, when about to return, pressed her to accompany him to his home. He had readily detected the unhappiness of her situation, and being a very kind and benevolent man, was inclined to do all in his power to remove it. Mrs. Ross urged Jane to make the proposed visit, and, at length, she consented. She had expected Horace would have opposed her going; but, on the contrary, he assented, and advised her to go. This was a great disappointment to Jane, for though she was too kind to wish any one to suffer, much less one so dearly loved; yet, she would have measured his love by the reluctance he felt at parting with her for the first time since she had promised to become his wife. She turned away from his careless remarks, and, smothering the pang she felt, informed her uncle that she had decided to accept his invitation; and after a few days of hurried preparation, during which she saw little of Horace, she departed.

Jane carried with her a sad heart, but was somewhat comforted by the memory of a few words at parting, and an evident reluctance to give her up, at the last moment. But even in her new home, when she would strive to comfort herself, in her bereavement, by these sweet memories, there would arise, before her mental vision, the brilliant face and graceful figure of Annie Thorn, and with a sick heart Jane would fancy Horace sunning himself in the light of those glorious eyes, and listening to the music of that sweetly-modulated voice.

After Jane's departure Horace continued his attentions to Miss Thorn. It was something akin to a sensation of relief that he did so, for he no longer dreaded the saddened gaze of poor Jane's eyes, which had, all the while, haunted him. He kept repeating to himself that he loved Jane as much as ever, but that as she was not his wife, yet, she had no right to expect that he would not show attentions to another. Besides, interest whispered that it was politic to propitiate Judge Thorn and his brother, Annie's father, the Senator, for both had great influence, which was just what the young, briefless lawyer needed. So like the silly moth he kept fluttering about the candle, and singeing the wings of his vanity in its rays, all the while stifling his conscience, or striving to appease it, by writing often to poor Jane, letters which he felt, though he would not own it to himself, came from a divided heart.

At length this dallying came to an end. By the influence of Judge Thorn a most desirable opportunity for establishing himself in business was offered him in a far Western city. He could not refuse to go, and, breaking away from his Delilah, he was soon en route for his new home. On his way he visited Jane, and the old habit of loving her returned as soon as he was under her influence. A few happy days were spent with her. All the plans and purposes of their future life, which now, for the first time, seemed approaching their fruition, were discussed; and, at length, he parted from her full of deep contentment that a being so meek and gentle, yet so strong and enduring in moral power, was to be his wife and stand by his side all his life as the help-meet designed for him by the Creator.

But, as he receded from her, gradually her image faded out, and its place was occupied by dashing Annie Thorn. After he reached his new home, as he went about completing his arrangements, as he sat alone in his office, in the intervals of business, or lay upon his wakeful pillow, at night, his thoughts were divided between the two. He corresponded with both, with Miss Thorn as a friend, with Jane for a time as a lover. In no other way could he write to her, and when, after a time, he found that, even while he penned loving words to her, thoughts of another would rise up to fill his mind, he had enough of conscientiousness left to forbid him to act so palpable a lie. So he ceased writing and Jane was left to the torturing anxiety of unanswered letters, and explanations withheld. Loving him as she did, she was, of course, deeply troubled. Again and again she wrote in vain. Horace had not courage to tell the truth, and yet was coward enough to refuse all explanation. At length she heard, in some way, that he was well and succeeding even beyond his hopes in business, and then she resigned herself to her fate. She knew that he was striving to forget her, and she nerved herself to the task of enduring her disappointment. His image was too deeply engraved upon her soul to be lightly effaced, and yet she must strive not to think of him.

Jane, with all her gentleness and feebleness, was wise and strong. She knew that only occupation, constant and long continued, could effectually aid her in driving from her mind the deep, but vain regrets which oppressed her. Her heart yearned for the familiar scenes amidst which her days of love and happiness had been passed. But she suppressed the inclination to return thither. She resolved to remain with her uncle, who was childless, and, that she might, as much as possible, fill time and thoughts, she opened a school. As a teacher she was most successful, and though not quite happy, she was at least peaceful and contented. Wisely she accommodated herself to the indications of her destiny, and felt that, while she might not fill up the measure of her usefulness in the domestic sphere, she need not shut her eyes and deny herself the power of doing good, and adding to the happiness of others in the different, but not less important, sphere which she had chosen.

Thus two years passed on. At their close Jane made her first visit to her home. She had heard that Horace was firmly established in a lucrative business in his Western home, where he had already attained an enviable reputation in his profession, while Miss Thorn had long since returned to the city. It was, therefore, with no fear of meeting either, that she proceeded upon this visit to her mother.

It was very painful, very sad, this first visit to the scenes which had once been glorified by her love, but she had not struggled so long to yield weakly to this trial; and she had passed two or three weeks contentedly in her old home when suddenly Horace Manners appeared upon the scene.

What had drawn him thither at that particular time I knew not, but he suddenly presented himself before Jane, as she sat in the little home parlor, one summer evening, entertaining a pleasant party of friends. It was well that the presence of observing eyes made repression a necessity, or both might have betrayed emotions which they wished to conceal. But Jane met her old lover with such a pleasant, cordial greeting that none detected the tremor which shook her voice, and Horace bowed so low over her extended hand that the crimson flush which dyed his face passed unobserved. Most of the persons assembled were old friends and acquaintances of Horace, and they surrounded and occupied him during the evening so that Jane had time to recover from her embarrassment, and was saved the necessity of talking until she had conquered that tell-tale faltering which would have betrayed her emotion.

Horace lingered after the other guests had departed, but he could not gain courage for an explanation. So after a short common-place conversation they parted. On the morrow he came again. The quiet, gentle dignity of Jane's manner had revived his desire to call her his own. He came penitent and suing for a reinstatement in his old privileges. Again he offered himself, and almost abjectly besought her not to refuse him. Jane was much surprised and a little contemptuous. Yet she would not lightly decide. She knew that Horace was the only man she had ever loved, and she *felt* that she could never love another. Perhaps it was her duty to ratify and renew her old engagement. Yet could she trust one who had shown himself so fickle and unreliable, who had caused her already the bitterest sufferings of her life? She asked for time to consider the matter. To this Horace consented, with a very bad grace. He evidently felt that he had made necessary reparation, for all he had made her suffer, in humbling himself to sue for pardon. But as Jane was firm in her determination not to answer, at once, he was forced to submit.

The next day he departed for the city. Here he renewed his acquaintance with Miss Thorn. Day after day he found himself in her presence, and, as had happened before, every day caused the image of Jane Ross to grow less. At the end of a week he offered himself to her, and was accepted. Amidst the joy which this almost unexpected acceptance caused, a pang of sharp pain shot through his heart at the thought of Jane. But the next moment he comforted himself with the thought that *she* had asked time to consider, and even yet might refuse him.

He had been a month in the city. The next morning he was to be married to Miss Thorn. All preparations were completed for their journey to his Western home—all except some trifles necessarily delayed until the time of departure. Horace had been busied about these, nearly the whole day, and returned at evening, to his apartment at the hotel, to dress for his last visit to Miss Thorn. A letter lay upon the table. Mechanically he took it up, and opening it, without glancing at the superscription, he found it was from Jane. With an eager interest he read it, growing pale and red by turns, and, as he finished, he dashed it in his clenched hand upon the table. "Too late, too late," he exclaimed, and then he wept. Jane had again accepted him.——

Two days after, Manners and his bride arrived at S. Horace was in a vast hurry to reach his home, "where business called him," he said, but he could not refuse the request of his bride to visit her uncle, *en route*.

All S. flocked to Judge Thorn's splendid mansion, which was thrown open to the friends of Mr. and Mrs. Manners. But, in her solitary room, sat Jane Ross and watched the lights which gleamed from every window of the great house where such high revelry was held. Her letter, written after many days of painful thought and rigid self-examination—the letter, which announced that she had, at last, determined to unite her fate with that of the man who had so cruelly sported with her feelings, because in spite of all she loved him solely, had received no answer until he came, with his bride, to show her how vain had been her weary trial, and how her re-awakened devotion had been requited.

Now she was striving to subdue herself. Once she had fought the same fearful strife with her own heart, and had triumphed. Nor was she less successful now.

I question if Horace were happier than she. He never looked upon his brilliant bride, but the vision of his gentle, early love rose up before him, and he felt, even in the midst of the first bliss of early married days, a haunting consciousness of having bartered his happiness for a worthless bauble.

Jane has never married. But she has made for herself a useful and happy career. She went back to her school. Into the plans for its enlargement and improvement she entered with her whole heart. Her ambitions and aspirations were satisfied. She is a most busy and cheerful little woman. Her heart is as strong as if Cupid and Horace Manners had never wounded it; and, though the world has, no doubt, lost in her a useful wife and mother, it has gained much by her devotion to another sphere, for which she is perhaps as well fitted. She loves and is beloved by her pupils, and she says, and I am much inclined to believe it, that all the cravings of her heart are satisfied.

Horace has become a great man. He has been twice elected to Congress, and his wife made as great a sensation in the fashionable, as he in the political world of Washington. It is said, however, that her brilliancy is all for the public, and that Horace has not been as successful in his pursuit of domestic happiness, as of political preferment.

I have no doubt he sighs more frequently over the changes which separated him from Jane, after their long engagement, in the midst of his brilliant career, than she from amidst the beautiful influences by which she has surrounded herself.

"But," said Ellen, "all women are not strong and wise enough to seek out occupations which may worthily fill the blank in life left by the breaking of a long engagement. After looking steadily to one result for years, life must seem and be utterly purposeless to most women in such a contingency."

"No doubt, dear," I said, rolling up the last little stocking, "but my story shows the wisdom of being prepared to act for one's self, and of not looking to marriage as the sole end and aim of woman's existence. Nevertheless, I would advise all women to avoid long engagements if possible, not from the selfish wish of securing the lover at once and beyond recal, but because in this world of change it involves an ordeal out of which few can come unscathed and prepared nobly for the cares and duties of the domestic or any other sphere."

POETRY, LOVE, AND DEATH.

A short time since a young girl of remarkable beauty, and fashionably dressed, but whose demeanor and features betrayed an infirm mind, was encountered one stormy evening in the streets of the Martyrs, in Paris. An honorable man living in the neighborhood, M. Saville, defended the unfortunate girl from the indiscreet curiosity of some young men, took her home, and confided her to his wife, who bestowed upon her the greatest attention.

To all questions as to her name and family, the insane girl remained deaf. She placed herself at a writing desk, and began to compose and write verses which betrayed a violent passion, the probable cause of her madness.

Some days after M. Saville wrote to the Constitutional, which had announced the previous details, that the young girl was dead. Once only during sixty-two hours she had consented to take any nourishment. The efforts of science had failed to triumph over her resolution, and after two hours of frightful convulsions, she had died with the name of *Robert* on her lips. The sole indication by which to trace her individuality was the mark E. B. on her linen. Not long after, the Gazette des Tribunaux, gave the following details, which complete the touching and dramatic history:

Emily B——, daughter of a rich iron-master of Belgium, was destined by her father's orders, to marry the son of a brewer, whose fortune equalled her own. But the young girl had already disposed of her affections. The object of her love was a young man named Robert D——, a writer and artist, but little favored by fortune. Emily, as appeared by the fragments of her poetry, was devoted to literature. She was of an exalted and romantic character, and passed much of her time in writing.

When her father whose inflexibility she understood, ordered her to renounce her romance, and prepare to marry immediately the brewer's son, she communicated the fatal injunction to the young artist. They endeavored to discover the means of eluding it. Emily could imagine nothing but a double suicide. Robert, whom another plan had suggested itself to, begged her to postpone awhile her terrible design.

The same evening he went to a saloon, where he knew he would meet the brewer's son. A quarrel took place between the two young men. A blow received by one of them was followed by a duel, in which Robert was killed.

The day after this event, Emily D—— disappeared from her home, taking with her her jewels and a small sum of money. All attempts to find her in Belgium were without success. When the fact of a young girl's being found in the street of Martyrs and M. Saville's letter were seen by M. B——, in a Parisian paper which he took, it struck him from the mark that it was his daughter. He took the road to Paris immediately, and sought M. Saville's house. There he was shown the effects and verses left by the insane girl. All his doubts were dissipated; the tears burst from his eyes, and he appeared the prey of the most profound grief, accusing himself of having been the cause of his child's death. M. Saville was shown a touching letter left by Emily before her flight, which, like her poetry, revealed the possession of great talent.

In spite of the importunities of the generous man who had succored his child, and although he himself was seriously ill from the effects of his mental suffering, M. B—— insisted upon returning immediately to Belgium.

THE BEAUTY OF YOUTH.

The most disagreeable period of human life is that questionable era when one is neither boy nor man—that graceless self-conceited age so fecund of bird-nesting and orchard-robbing; so brimful of *pomatum* and *old pistols*. When the sentiments are in limbo, and the rude energies and activities are impatient of the least restraint. When one is, in short, pragmatical as a learned pig; whistling and crowing from dawn till dark like a musical young chanticleer—and as continually on the aggressive as a courageous barking puppy. Yet in spite of all this, how beautiful and significant is youth!

COME MAY!

BY OLIVER SINCLAIR.

Come, May! joy-bringer come!
For thy presence the Summer birds wait—
The bloom-sprites are dancing around the grey wimple—
That Winter hath worn—each sweet as a dimple,
And the jubilant voices vibrate—
The swallows and plover
Are flitting all over;
The fields are aglow, and the honey-bees hum.

Come, May! purified with graces,
The velvety vista is seen,
And bright, dew-dripping faces
Peep out from its emerald green!
Soon, soon, will the white-robed maids be advancing
To a banquet of joy and of music and dancing—
The doves are beginning to coo
For the Queen of the Feast to be crowned in her glory,
When Love, the gay charmer, will whisper his story
Of hopes and light promises too!

Come, May, come, with sweet kisses!
There's a dear little life that we cherish full well—
It's name is thine own—'tis a pure asphodel—
A casket of exquisite blisses:
Our home holds the treasure,
That worlds could not measure,
And the dawn of thy reign shall forever be blest,
And aye in thy coming we'll hail thee a guest;
For its lustres are marked with thy blossoming hour,
That placed in our garden the beautiful flower.

Come, May! Bride of the roses!
Oh, win you sad roamer from shadowy gloom—
Oh, waft to his soul thy rich spices and bloom:—
Whilst his being reposes
Weave a wreath of glad hopes from thy glowing parterre;
Bid his sorrows disperse, and let visions of her—
The one of his thought—
All smiling he brought,
That his spirit may heal with its throbs of delight,
And wake to real happiness nothing can blight,
Come, May! joy-bringer, come!
Where blue-bells are waving and honey-bees hum.

COUSIN HARRY.

BY YULA.

> "Young love's first dream,
> A dream unreal, shadowy, brief,
> Is done and ended, and my heart so far
> Not much the worse for wear."
>
> HORNE.

You might search from one end to the other of our glorious "Union," and not come across a more bewitching man than cousin Harry. A perfect love of a man, was the unanimous verdict of all his female relations.

Cousin Harry was by no means a Hercules in figure. On the contrary, he was slight in form, yet lithe and graceful as a young willow tree. He had large dark eyes, full of soul and tenderness, and magnificent raven black hair, which waved in superb luxurience around his high white forehead.

Cousin Harry had a melancholy expression, which always plays the mischief with the ladies. Show me a man who has a slightly unhappy look, as if circumstances had conspired against him, or as if some secret grief had entered into his soul, and I will show you one with whom all the ladies, in his immediate circle of acquaintance, are more or less in love. We feminines have an infinite fund of compassion, an unfathomable well of pity, for all suffering humanity, *especially* in the shape of handsome young gentlemen. Now, why we should be more compassionate to a nice young man, who has really no very serious troubles, than to a poor forlorn old one, such, for instance, as occasionally implores us for alms, in the street, I cannot tell, but such is the fact.

Did I love him did you ask?

Yes, I fancied I did, at one time. I was about fifteen then, and Harry about seventeen. We had grown up in the same city, and had been playmates from our earliest childhood.

I remember distinctly with what admiration I regarded him as he sauntered along to school, by my side, gallantly carrying my spelling-book, and with what a fierce air he would flourish his little cane, and threaten to annihilate all the big boys that so much as looked at me.

I recollect, too, how once, when Harry bought me a little sugar heart, with a bit of paper wrapped around it, on which was written in an irregular school boy hand, "to my little wife," how expressively our mammas (who happened to be present) looked at each other, and declared, "that it would certainly be a match, some day, and how glad they would be to have it so."

When he was sixteen, Harry was sent away to boarding-school, from whence he was to go to college.

I will pass over our parting; the silent agony with which I embroidered him a "bachelor's pincussion," dropping a tear at every stitch, and which he vowed to carry always in the left pocket of his vest; and our farewell, under the old pear tree, in the garden. How we remained locked in each other's arms, speechless with grief, in which situation we were discovered by the cook. There is fresh in my mind, at this moment, the look of pride with which Harry exhibited to me, packed away in a remote corner of his trunk, a small dressing case, which contained a very sharp looking razor, with which Harry proposed to lay low the incipient moustache just visible on his upper lip.

After Harry's departure, I remained in anything but a pleasant state of mind for more than a week, and learned my lessons superficially, and was reprimanded at school in consequence.

I have a vivid recollection of being disgraced in the chemistry class, because on being asked what substances had a strong affinity for each other, I answered a question which I had mentally propounded to myself, a moment before—whether persons, as well as chemical substances, had not also affinities for each other?

Thinking of dear Harry, I unconsciously replied, cousins. Upon hearing this answer, our preceptress, with a virtuously indignant look, declared that I had not studied my lesson at all, and must remain after school and learn it.

Several years passed away. At first I heard often from cousin Harry, but after a while, the very deep interest which we took in each other declined, and we dropped the correspondence, which we had at first kept up.

When I was eighteen I left school, and that summer, a party of friends were going to lake George to spend a few weeks, and they urged me to go with them.

Mamma, poor dear soul, who is wedded to her own home, and would be as crazy as a fly in a drum at a fashionable watering place, could not be persuaded to go, and I knew it would be a very difficult matter to induce papa to let me go without her.

He looks upon me as the very apple of his eye, and I believe he really thinks more of me than of those everlasting stocks in which he is forever speculating.

The escort of a married lady friend of our's was unexceptionable, so I enlisted mamma on my side, and we agreed to besiege papa in due form.

Mamma has a way, I am sure I cannot tell how, of managing papa, when he is inclined to be refractory, about anything which we wish to do, and generally brings him round in the end. Papa proved to be a perfect Malakoff on the subject, but as even a Malakoff has a weak point, so mamma, like a skillful general, finally carried the day.

The first point gained, the next was to coax from papa sufficient amount of cash, to fit me out nicely. Mamma said, I must manage that myself; so I waited until after dinner one day, when papa seemed to be in an unusually gracious mood, as is usual with the sterner sex, when their hunger is appeased, and then with some trepidation I opened the subject.

I told him that I wanted a dress or two, and a few trifles in the shape of laces, embroideries, &c., and that a moderate sum, say a hundred or so, to supply the deficiencies in my wardrobe, would be very gratefully received.

Papa looked at me, with a, no you dont, sort of air and pulled up his shirt collar to an alarming height, behind which he might be said to have entrenched himself.

I began to think it was all over, as far as obtaining the little sum I had mentioned, was concerned.

"But, papa precious," I said, as I went and curled his grey whiskers over my fingers, "do you know those odious Finn girls are going to lake George? and they are making extensive preparations in the way of dresses, and I can't endure to see them always flaunting in more things than I have." I knew *that* argument must tell, for papa can't bear the Finns.

"Well, Effie," said he, "I guess I can afford to dress you, as well as old Finn does his girls, but the fact is, stocks are below par just now. There is the Terrific Fire Insurance Company in which I own considerable stock, has met with losses to an alarming extent lately, and does'nt pay any premium at all; and the Put-em-through Railroad Company, of which I am a director, has had a terrible smash-up lately, and we are called upon to pay damages for broken heads and limbs. However, Effie, those Finn girls shan't outshine my daughter, I am determined, so here is the money."

And so I went to lake George, and whom do you think I saw, as I ascended, with my friends, the steps of the hotel? Who, but cousin Harry.

He was very much improved, and really had quite an elegant air. There was the same melancholy expression in his eyes, though.

He looked at me earnestly for a moment, before he recognised me, and then came eagerly forward, with extended hand—

"Dear cousin Effiie, how glad I am to see you, but how you are changed!" was his exclamation.

Yes, I *was* changed in more respects than one. I did not care at all for cousin Harry now. I had quite lost sight of him, for several years, and moreover, there was a charming young gentleman, whom I had seen rather frequently, during the last year, and I—but never mind that, let me return to cousin Harry.

We met constantly now. He attached himself to our party at once, and was cavalier general to all of us, more especially to me. He was careful to see that I was well waited on at the table, held my shawl while I was dancing, and was an indefatigable partner, in polka and shottisch. He made himself the life and soul of our party; got up fishing excursions, and boating frolics, and was generally useful and always agreeable.

During a walk that we took, the first evening, after we met, he informed me that he was nearly engaged to a young lady, with whom he became acquainted while pursuing his education. She was young, rich, and charming, he said, and the parents on both side wished it to be a match, but she was too quiet, he thought, to suit him.

"The fact is, cousin Effiie," he continued, "I'm afraid I don't love her as well as I ought to. Another thing, I am of opinion that a man is very foolish to marry and settle down before he is thirty. No! I am going to 'flirt,' as some of you ladies do, and have a good time generally, cousin Effie, before I resign *my* freedom."

Was'nt it wicked in him to say *that*?

Our conversation placed me quite at my ease. I had feared that the old liking for me, had again resumed its power, but now I thought I understood him.

He only wanted to have a little innocent flirtation. I had visited a watering place for amusement, and flirtation is one of the orthodox recreations of such a place. So we took moonlight walks and rides, and danced the German together, and were quite devoted to each other.

How did it end, did you ask?

Well, one charming evening, cousin Harry invited me to take a walk along the shore of the lake.

The moon was nearly at her full, and she looked down on the calm water only to see her own bright image reflected there. The trees threw long quivering shadows on the watery mirror, and the fire flies danced and glittered among the leaves.

We sat down quietly on some fragments of rocks. We both felt the influence of the scene—that soft spell that nature throws around us, in a moment like this.

My companion seemed, for a time, even more absorbed than myself, in gazing at the moonlit scene before us.

Suddenly he turned to me, and said in a low tone, "Effie, dear cousin Effie."

There was something in his voice that made me start, and with a woman's tact, I at once perceived what was coming.

"No!" I replied hurriedly, "don't tell me any of your secrets to night, cousin Harry."

"Listen, Effie, I must tell you, I cannot keep it to myself any longer. Did you know that I love you, Effie? Do not hide your head cousin, look at me."

I did look, and behold on the tip of cousin Harry's nose, an immense musquito. The hungry insect hung there, motionless. An angry slap from cousin Harry's hand, and it flew singing away.

I hid my face in my handkerchief.

"Speak to me, Effie. Do not break my heart by telling me that you cannot love me. Do not sob so, Effie," as a smothered sound escaped from my handkerchief.

I remained motionless. Cousin Harry gently took hold of my hands, to remove them, whispering softly, "Let me wipe away those tears, dearest."

The handkerchief fell from my face. I was laughing.

Heartless! wasn't it?

I could not help it. I had experienced a sudden nervousness, when I discovered that cousin Harry's attentions meant something more than a mere flirtation, and felt much more like crying than laughing, until I looked in his face, and saw that wretch of a musquito. *That* turned the scale. The worst of it was, I couldn't stop laughing.

"Oh! Effie, Effie, how can you?" said cousin Harry, in a broken voice.

What bitter compunctions of conscience visited me then.

"Dear Harry, forgive me. It was very wrong, cruel; but I couldn't help it. That odious musquito was the cause of it. Say you pardon me, Harry," and the tears now really stood in my eyes. "I am sorry that I cannot love you, as you wish, but I am already engaged—and I trust that you will forget this evening, and make that young lady happy, whom you told me about, when we first met."

"Never," and cousin Harry offered me his arm, and said something about the evening being damp, and that we had better return to the hotel.

The next morning, when I came down to breakfast, cousin Harry was already at the table. He looked melancholy, and his poor nose was very much swollen, and I noticed that he was frequently obliged to rub it with his handkerchief.

I thought vengefully of that musquito. Wouldn't I have made a Fox's martyr of him, if I could have got hold of his musquitoship?

Harry took the earliest conveyance, after breakfast, back to the city. We parted good friends, but he vowed that it should be the last chance he would ever give a lady to refuse him. He hinted gloomily that he thought of proceeding at once to the Crimea, to join the French army, or else of applying to the Board of Foreign Missions to be sent out as a missionary to the coast of Africa. But I rather think he has thought better of it since.

I remained at Lake George only two or three days after his departure, and then returned home.

When I arrived at the depot, I found papa waiting to receive me. Dear old gentleman! he seemed as glad to see me as if I had been the last steamer, just arrived from Europe, bringing news which would favorably influence the money market, instead of his petted daughter, who only puzzled *her* head to know how to spend the money that he made.

"Well, Effie, dear," he said, after he had pinched my cheeks, to see if they had grown any harder since I went away, "did you see anything of the Finn girls?"

Now, I had hardly seen them at all, for they only remained two or three days at Lake George, and then went somewhere else. So I had not much to tell papa about them. Still he seemed to expect considerable gossip in regard to them.

Talk about ladies alone having curiosity. They haven't half so much as the gentlemen. Even these real old family chaps, who seem only devoted to their briefs and ledgers, (not NEW YORK LEDGER, gentle reader, although many of them like to read it,) take just as much interest in their neighbors' affairs as we do.

In the evening, as we were all sitting in mamma's cosy little dressing-room, and talking over my adventures, during my trip to Lake George, I heard the door-bell pulled, and presently the servant brought a card up for me. It was an unexceptionable looking card, and bore the name of Frederic Lochart.

It was not the unexpectedness of the visit, I am sure, that brought the warm flush that I felt was covering my face and even neck, but mamma seemed frightened as she looked at me.

"Effie, dear, what ails the child? She has a rush of blood to her head. It is very dangerous! Do run for hartshorn," said she to the servant, who waited for further orders.

Poor dear mamma! She hadn't even an inkling of the truth. She had forgotten how the sight of a loved name had once had power to call the blush to *her* cheek. It is astonishing how people do forget their youthful feelings as they grow older.

I quieted mamma's fears, and assured her that I never felt better, and then descended to the parlor.

I paused at the half open door, and looked, myself concealed, into the room. I saw seated on an ottoman, in a quiet state of expectancy, Mr. Frederic Lochart.

Look with me a moment through the open door.

Mr. Frederic Lochart is not what would be called a very handsome man; he does not appear so at least, to a casual observer. He had a broad, full forehead, almost too high to make his face well proportioned. His dark, blue eyes are lit up with intelligence, and they flash at times with the fire of intellect. Amid his lips lingered an expression of kindness and benevolence.

I liked Mr. Lochart very much. I am sure I do not know why, unless it was because he liked me.

Mr. Lochart greeted me kindly as I entered the room, and his face wore a pleasant smile.

How happy that smile made me! It was like a flood of glorious sunshine, illumining for me the world and the dim future.

"I had something particular to say to you this evening, Miss Effie," he commenced, as he seated himself by me on the lounge.

What did he say, did you ask?

Just as if I were going to tell you! Recollect what your husband said to you in those happy days, when you were lovers, or, if you are not so fortunate as to have a husband, imagine what you would like to hear the person you love best in the world, say to you, and you will have an idea of what Frederic said to me then.

I referred him to papa and mamma, as an affectionate daughter should do. I was very much agitated, and to give me time to recover my composure, Frederic began to talk about other things.

"What sort of a trip did you have to Lake George?" he remarked, at length. "My cousins, the Finns, were there a few weeks ago. Did you see anything of them?"

I looked at him in amazement. *He*, a cousin of those odious Finns! What would papa say? His aversion to the Finns was absolutely unconquerable. It really made me turn pale when I thought of it. I was sure papa would never consent to my marrying any near relation of *that* family. However, I was determined not to let it interfere with my present happiness.

The next day Frederic called on papa at his office, and stated, in due form, his proposal to me, and requested his consent to our union.

When papa came home he looked unusually grave. After dinner he called me into his library.

I had not a great deal of difficulty in conjecturing what was about to follow.

He seated himself in his large arm-chair, and took from his pocket a pair of glasses, which he proceeded to wipe with great deliberation, while I waited, in fidgetty impatience, to know what he wished to say.

"Well, Effie," he commenced at last, "I was to-day reminded that you are arrived at years of discretion. Let me see; how old are you?"

"Eighteen last May, sir."

"Eighteen? That number of years, Effie, ought to bring with it much more staidness and sobriety than you have. Your mother was married at that age, and a very sensible person she was too. I trust you are aware of the advantages with which you are surrounded. You have everything that wealth, position, and education can give you. I hope, my child, that you realise that it is through your parents—in fact, Effie, I may say," added papa, drawing himself up with dignity, "that it is through my well-directed efforts in acquiring wealth, that you enjoy these blessings. Therefore, I trust that you acknowledge that you owe to your parents not only gratitude but obedience. For instance, if you fancied a gentleman, of whom your parents did not approve, would it not be your duty to make up your mind, after knowing their opinion, to think no more of him? I received to-day a call from a young gentleman named Frederic Lochart. He sought an interview, he said, for the purpose of obtaining my consent to an engagement with you. He stated that you had already given him cause to suppose that he was not an object of indifference to you. I was pleased with his frank and straightforward way of stating the matter. I was agreeably impressed with him until he happened to mention incidentally that he was a cousin of the Finns. Now, Effie, you never shall, with my consent, marry any of that odious family."

"But, papa," I ventured to remonstrate, "Frederic is only a cousin of theirs, and that is not such a very near relation."

"Near enough for us to be obliged to visit the Finns, and to receive them as friends at our house. Old Finn crossed my path once, and I have vowed never to forgive him," and papa's face was absolutely pale with passion. "No, Effie, you shall never marry him."

"Never? Oh, papa!" and I burst into tears. I told him that I loved Frederic, and that I would never marry anybody else. I begged and plead in vain. He was still inexorable, and I retired weeping to my room.

There, an hour later, mamma sought me. She sympathised, as only a mother can, with my grief. She advised me to be calm, and to try to bear, as well as I could, papa's stern decision, and to trust to time to effect a change in his views.

I saw no more of Frederic for several months. The world, everything, except the solitude of my own room, became insupportable to me. Existence was a misery. It was the first experience of the sorrows of life.

This trouble, to which I abandoned myself, finally affected my health. I grew pale and thin, and our family physician declared that he thought "there was a strong prospect of my going into a decline."

Papa, who had tried in every way to divert me from my melancholy, seemed at last very much troubled.

One day, after having had an interview with the doctor, he came into my room, and seated himself near the lounge, on which I was reclining.

"How is my Effie to-day?" said he, as he laid a beautiful boquet on my pillow. His voice trembled, and I saw a tear glisten in his eye.

I did not answer, but looked at him with astonishment.

"Tell me, Effie," he continued, "what will make you better. I cannot see you suffer so."

"Oh! papa, you know! There is one thing, may I dare to mention it?"

"Yes, my child! speak your mind freely."

"Well, papa, if you would only consent to my seeing Frederic, once more."

"You shall see him, as often as you like, Effie. I withdraw all opposition towards him."

"How shall I thank you, my best papa, said I, as I threw my arms about him.

"Only by getting well, Effie."

Frederic's first visit proved a very medicine to me. There is nothing like an unlooked for happiness to give strength through the mind to the body. It is as a mental tonic.

I rapidly recovered my health and spirits, and preparations were formed for my approaching marriage.

I sat one morning in the parlor, with mamma, making out a list of guests, to be invited to our wedding party, when the hall door was thrown open, and in walked cousin Harry.

"Why, cousin Harry, how do you do? how glad and surprised I am to see you," I exclaimed, eagerly.

"Very well, Effie, never better, and as for my charming aunt and cousin, I suppose they are the same, judging by their looks," said he gallantly.

"We were just making out a list of guests, for Effie's wedding," remarked mamma, "but we did not know that you were in town."

I watched cousin Harry, to see how he would take this information. I expected to see him turn pale, at least.

But no—he looked as unconcerned as possible, and coolly replied, "Then I am just in time to be groomsman; you will give me that privilege, won't you, Effie?" he added, with a provoking smile.

Was I disappointed that he felt so little emotion at my approaching nuptials? What an odd and capricious thing a woman's heart is! I am sure I was really glad, that he had recovered from his disappointment, and yet my vanity was wounded for a moment, that he could, in so short a time, feel so much indifference, at my becoming another's.

"I did not even think of inviting you," I replied in as nonchalant a manner, as I could assume. "I concluded you had joined the army in the Crimea, or else that you had gone out as missionary to the coast of Africa, as you threatened.—Or perhaps the Board of Foreign Missions wouldn' temploy such a good-for-nothing fellow."

Cousin Harry laughed heartily. The merriment was infectious, and I joined in.

We chatted pleasantly of various matters, for some time.

"Effie," said Harry at length,—"coming up here, this morning, I met an old friend of mine, Miss Gordon, of whom I told you, while we were at lake George. She spent last winter in Washington, where I hear, she was very much admired. She is decidedly improved since I saw her last. I really fell in love with her, for the second time. I wish you would call on her, Effie, and send her an invitation, to this famous wedding of yours."

I promised to do as he requested, and he took his hat to go, saying gaily, as he opened the door, "now mind Effie, I shall expect an invitation to be groomsman, since I cannot be bridegroom."

Cool in him, wasn't it?

Our wedding was quite a brilliant affair. Papa said the Finns should not be invited, but as they were cousins of Frederic's after some discussion, he consented; though he declared that as it was the first, it should also be the last time, that they ever crossed his threshold, but the icy dignity with which he received them, was enough to chill even a tropical sunbeam.

Cousin Harry was devoted in his attentions to Miss Gordon, and ere long he married her to "spite" me. I had no time just then to indulge in any reflections on the fickleness of masculine love in general, and cousin Harry's in particular, being too much absorbed in my own happiness, to think much about any body except myself and the one dearest to me.

My simple story is finished. I have endeavored to relate it in a plain, natural manner, just as it occurred, without striving for "effect" or attempting to get up "scenes." If it conveys to the reader a *true* picture of life, I shall be satisfied.

* * *

THE DIFFERENCE.—It appears that, in New Zealand, when the marriage ceremony takes place, it is a very old custom to knock the heads of the bride and bridegroom together, previous to their union:

In Christian lands, it isn't so;
The bridegroom and the bride,
To loggerheads but seldom go,
Until the knot is tied.

ELLEN GREY.

BY BRYAN GRANT.

"He's come at last!" said pretty Ellen Grey;
"He's come at last! he's come to me once more;"
And bright grew her face as a summer's day,
As bounded she to open wide the door.

He clasp'd her form, and kissed her lilly cheek;
But the kiss chilled, for his lips were icy cold.
The maiden shrank and could not to him speak,
For his embrace was like a serpent's fold.

"I've come," he said "to say farewell to thee,
Soon, Ellen, will a lady rich and gay
Become a wife, and splendid bride to me:
I cannot stoop to marry thee Ellen Grey."

One look upon his darken'd brow she cast—
One cry—then broke the heart of Ellen Grey.
One heavy groan and sigh—'twas Ellen's last—
The shrouded angel bore her soul away.

Ah! years on years shall rolling pass away;
But by the murd'rer's side for aye shall stand
Reproachfully the ghost of Ellen Grey,
And, mocking, point unto a brighter land.

Ah! he shall hear a voice none else can hear,
And see a ghostly form none else can see,
Till chills his blood with awful dread and fear,
And quakes his soul with mortal agony.

Curs'd be the hand, and damn'd for aye the soul,
Of him who ruined and did betray,
Of him who broke the heart, and freed the soul,
Of gentle hearted, loving Ellen Grey.

TROY, April 29th, 1856.

BORROWED MONEY.

A LIFE LESSON.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

Among all the minor evils of life there is none worse for the youth just entering upon the stage of active business than the habit of borrowing money. We mean that indiscriminate borrowing of money, here, there, and everywhere, and on all occasions, which becomes a part of the character of so many of our people. Now there is no man in business who may not at times need some accommodation in pecuniary matters; but the youth who has regular wages can find little excuse for borrowing money. A simple story of real life, the incidents of which came under our own observation, will express what we mean.

Seth Pike was a journeyman carpenter, and received fair wages. He had been married a year, and was keeping house with one of the best little wives in the world. He was five-and-twenty years of age, an excellent workman, and his prospects in the morning of his manhood were bright and promising. There was no just reason why all should not go well with him.

One evening Seth came home with a small pocket pistol, and he showed it to his wife with an expression which seemed to indicate that he had gained some great good.

"What have you got there, Seth?" asked the wife. "Oh!——Don't! It's a pistol!"

"'Taint loaded, Maria, so you needn't be afraid of it."

"But what in the world did you get that for?"

"What?—Why— What does any one have a pistol for?"

"Why—to shoot folks, I suppose."

"Not always," said Seth.

"Perhaps not," returned Maria. "But still that is what they are made for, and I don't know that they are of much use for anything else. But what did you get it for?"

"Why," returned the young husband, rather dubiously, "it will be handy to fire at a mark with; and—and—in case I should ever need it for self-defence it will be handy. Bill Cotting had it, and as he was going away he wanted to sell it. He only asked me three dollars for it. I call that cheap."

Maria gazed up into her husband's face, and at length she said, in a low, meaning tone,—

"You won't blame me, Seth,—but really I think that this pistol would be dear to you at any price. You haven't paid for it yet?"

"Yes, I have."

"But I thought you had no money by you this morning."

"Yes—I know. But Sam lent me the money until Saturday."

"And so you borrowed the money to buy it with?"

"Yes."

"Ah, Seth," said the gentle wife, with a dubious shake of the head, "you have made a bad trade, most surely. You have not only bought that for which you have no earthly use, but you have borrowed the money to pay for it with. You said you would not borrow any more if you could help it."

"But there was no great harm in borrowing three dollars to buy this with," returned Seth. "I can pay it back Saturday."

"I know you can, but then it is not so easy a matter after all. I had hoped you would lay up something this year; but you will not if you go on at this rate."

Seth began to show some uneasiness, and the subject was dropped for the time; but he had lost all joy in the possession of his pistol. He went out in the morning and fired some dozen shots at a target,—and he might have set his wife up in the same place without danger, for his target was not touched. At the end of a week his pistol was laid away, and used no more.

"Seth," said his wife one day, after the pistol had been laid one side, "will you answer me one question freely?"

"Certainly," returned the young man, with a smile.

"Then tell me: Would you have bought that pistol if you had been obliged to pay the money directly from your own pocket?"

"Pay from my own pocket? Why, did I not pay it so?" answered Seth with a look of surprise.

"No, Seth—you borrowed the money, and it seemed to you like gaining so much.—Don't shake your head so, for I know. Now had you had just three dollars in your pocket, of your own, I do not believe you would have spent it so. You would have hung on to it for some more useful purpose. But the habit of borrowing is upon you, and you have allowed it to seem to you as though borrowed money was more easily gained than money earned, and hence you spend it more freely. Is it not so?"

"Why—no, Maria."

"Ah—you don't reflect. Now look at it: You have your pay every month, and surely there can be no earthly need of your borrowing money. If you would resolve henceforth not to borrow a penny, except under the most absolute necessity, you would get along much more pleasantly; for depend upon it,—you spend much more of borrowed money than you would of your own. I know this. And now when do you mean to begin to lay up money for your house?"

"I mean to begin right away," said Seth.

"I hope you will," resumed the wife. "And now let's see: You have forty dollars a month, and we can live on twelve of it easily. Your pay amounts to four hundred and eighty dollars a year, and I know that our actual living costs us no more than a hundred and forty-four; and our rent is eighty dollars more, which leaves us two hundred and fifty-six dollars. Now I believe that fifty-six dollars will clothe us. You ought to lay up nearly two hundred a year, at any rate. Don't you think so?"

"Well—perhaps I can after I get everything all settled," said her husband, thoughtfully.

"Aye," added Maria, with a smile, "after you have got all settled, and stopped borrowing."

"But I can easily stop that as soon as I get all squared up."

"No, no. Stop, uttered the wife, earnestly; "you must stop borrowing *first*. Just so long as you continue to borrow just so long will you continue unsettled; for I know that you spend much needlessly when you have other people's money in your pocket. Now look at it: You must in the end pay everything from your wages, and why not commence now? If you owe anything, pay up as fast as you can from what you earn."

Seth half promised to be governed by this advice, and no doubt he meant so to do; but the passion was strong upon him. Only a week afterwards his quarter's rent became due, and he had no money. So he had to go and borrow twenty dollars. A week afterwards his month's wages were due, but he could not pay any of this towards the last borrowed money. He had numerous little sums to pay his companions which he had borrowed of them, and then he had to carry some home. At the end of a week he was out of money again, and on Saturday evening he borrowed five dollars of one of his shop-mates; and during the next week that five dollars melted away like dew. Then, of course, he had to borrow again. And so it went on; and so he kept on unsettling much faster than he could settle up. His wife watched him narrowly, and though she dared say no more at that time, yet she suffered much. She saw that her husband was growing worse and worse, and that ere long he must find deep trouble. And she saw, too, that this was all the result of his borrowing. She knew it. She knew how much he borrowed, and how he let it slip through his fingers. She knew that he would spend five dollars of borrowed money just as freely as he would have spent the same amount of his own if he had not owed a penny in the world.

But Seth Pike was well nigh at the length of his chain. He was about to receive a lesson which he had not looked for, but which his wife had feared.

It was early spring, and Seth's employer had made arrangements to move out into the western country. He had spent the winter out there, and had formed a company for the purpose of founding a town. A noble trac tof wood land had been bought; the site for a set of mills secured, and the thing promised well. In fact, it could not be anything else, for the township thus bought was one of the most advantageous locations, and only ten miles from the Mississippi, where steamers ran continually. One party had already offered ten thousand dollars for a sixth part of the property and prospects; but the owners would not sell.

Mr. Jones, who was Seth's employer, was the leader in the concern, and he was very anxious that Seth should go out with him. He offered to pay his expenses out, and then give him sixty dollars a month. To this proposal the young man consented at once. He went home and talked with his wife, and she was with him. She not only wished to do all she could to please her husband, but she readily wished to go out into the new country. So the plans were all laid, and as soon as the arrangements could be made Maria went to see her parents, who lived some fifteen miles distant, and who had themselves planned to go out to the West.

After Maria was gone Seth packed up his bedding, and sold off what little furniture he had, intending thus to pay his debts; but he found the proceeds of this sale insufficient to meet the demand. He had no idea that he owed so much. However, he paid what he could, and for the rest he could only promise to pay them when he was able.

At length the time came for him to start. He was to join his wife and then keep on direct, intending to meet Mr. Jones at Buffalo. It was Monday morning, and he had just brought out his trunk for the stage, when an officer entered the yard and placed a writ in his hand. Seth ran his eyes over the paper, and his face turned pale as ashes.

"What does this mean?" he gasped.

"Why," returned the officer, "it means you must pay that bill."

"But I cannot pay it now, sir. I haven't ixty dollars in the world."

"Then you must give bonds that you will not leave the State, or go to jail."

Seth could not get bonds, for his friends were gone. He had many fair-weather friends, but would they help him now? He tried hard, but he could not raise the help he needed. The stage went by, but Seth could not go. His heart sank within him, and he bowed his head, with pain and mortification. Before noon he was lodged in the jail, which was in the very town where he lived, and when he was left alone he covered his face with his hands and burst into tears. He had never expected such shame as this. For a while he allowed his indignation to overcome all other feelings, but ere long he remembered that his own folly had brought him down, and he could then only blame himself.

The night passed away in sleepless agony, and with the first beams of the morning came the jailor, followed by a female. Seth started up—he gazed beneath the light bonnet and—saw the sweet face of his wife. He uttered one low cry of joy, and on the next moment folded her in his arms. Something whispered to him of hope in the face of this, his best earthly friend.

"Come," whispered Maria, at the same time drawing her husband away, "let us begone from here."

"But I am a prisoner," uttered Seth, while a fearful shudder ran through his frame.

"No, no," said Maria, "you are a prisoner no more."

"You are free, sir," here spoke the jailor. "Your debts are paid. I have nothing more to do with you, only to hope that you will not be caught so again."

The young man would have asked more, but his wife drew him away, and ere long afterwards he was seated in a carriage with his wife and her brother.

* * * * *

"Maria, how did all this happen?" Seth asked this question on the following evening after they had retired to their room in the hotel.

The noble wife gazed up, and while a flood of soft love-light danced in her eyes, she said—

"Ah, Seth, I had long feared this. I have long known that this ordeal would come, and I have been prepared for it. My father gave me five hundred dollars over a year ago, and ere I would give it into your hands I wished that you should know something more of the value of money. You know you would not listen to my warning—"

"Stop, Maria. I did mean to listen, but I missed the true way of living up to the lesson. And yet it seems strange."

"What seems strange?"

Why—that I should have run so behind-hand."

"Surely there is nothing strange in the result," said the wife. "Now just listen: Let me show you one case, and that shall be a sample of the whole. You remember of borrowing five dollars of Samuel Phelps the first of March."

"Yes."

"Well—I knew of that, and I know how the money went. Now just remember—at that very time you owed twenty dollars which you had borrowed to pay your rent with, besides many small bills in other places. The first thing you did with that five-dollar bill was, to get it broken to pay for a bunch of cigars. Next, you bought two ice-creams at the fair. Next, you bought a bosom-pin; and the last of it you paid for a horse-ride. Now see: The money was not really yours; but you had it by you, and you did not realize that you might not spend it as you pleased without wrong. Yet you did a great wrong, for the money was another's in a double sense,—it not only belonged to him of whom you borrowed it, but also to others whom you owed. Now look back and see if you have not spent most of your money in the same way;—borrowed in advance—spent it—then borrowed again. Is it not so?"

Seth owned that it was. He saw it all plainly now. He blessed his wife, and told her that he would do so no more.

On the next morning Seth and his wife took the first stage, and after two days of travel they reached Buffalo, and were fortunate enough to find Jones there; and from thence the whole party set out together. In due time they reached the promised land, and ere many days they were at work in earnest.

And now Seth Pike commenced anew. He had seen the evils of borrowing money for the sake of having money to spend, and he was resolved that he would do so no more. He saw plainly now that the only true method of life was to buy nothing for which he could not pay unless it was something of absolute necessity, and even then to be wary of credit. But above all did he shun the folly of carrying other people's money in his pocket, and spending the same foolishly. And more still—he resolved that for the future he would never spend a single penny of borrowed money upon his own person.

And so the young man moved on in his new field of experiment, and he found it to work well.

"Maria," he uttered, as he sat by his wife's side one evening, about a year after his settlement in the new country, "I can hardly realize that I was ever such a fool as to run blindly into debt. Oh, if all could know the real joys of honest independence as compared with the miseries of the harrassed debtor, there would be few such fools as I have been."

"True," returned the wife, gazing up with an earnest expression; "but yet all cannot realise it. The great danger is in the *first debt*. Let a young man once get into debt, and it too often happens that those very energies which are necessary to free him from it are thereby cramped and prostrated. Oh! of all the curses which inflict the business world, DEBT stands at the head; and of all the evils which the youth just entering active life needs to shun none can be more dangerous than BORROWED MONEY."

Did she not speak the truth?

LONDON, PARIS AND NEW YORK FASHIONS.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ENGRAVINGS.

Fig. 1.—Bonnet of pink silk, ornamented with two white feathers tipped with pink. Dress of Pomona green silk. The skirt is trimmed all round by horizontal rows of black lace, set on in five distinct groups of a pyramidal form—the rows gradually becoming narrower as they ascend from the edge of the skirt to the waist. Each row of lace is headed by a quilling of very narrow green ribbon, and at the top of each pyramid there is a bow with flowing ends. Mantelet of black silk, shaped so as to fall very low on the shoulders, and the ends in front cut square. The trimming of the mantelet consists of passementerie and black lace. The edge is cut out in scallops, which are ornamented with embroidery. To these scallops are attached two narrow frills of silk, also scalloped, and pinked at the edges, and between each scallop a small tassel is suspended. A frill of narrow black lace runs between the two silk frills, and the mantelet is finished by a broad row of black lace set on full.

Fig. 2.—Bonnet of white crape—with folds of crape separated by rows of lace. A row of lace falls over the curtain at the back. The bonnet is trimmed with bows of white ribbon. Under-trimming, blonde and bouquets of verbena and jasmine. The dress is composed of blue and grey shaded silk. The skirt has two broad flounces, ornamented with black velvet and passementerie, and edged with a fringe in which the tints of the silk composing the dress are blended with an admixture of black. The corsage has a very deep basque, trimmed to correspond with the flounces, and a pelerine which descends to a point in front. The pelerine and the ends of the sleeves are trimmed like the other parts of the dress. Collar and sleeves of lace. A cashmere shawl may be worn to complete the costume.

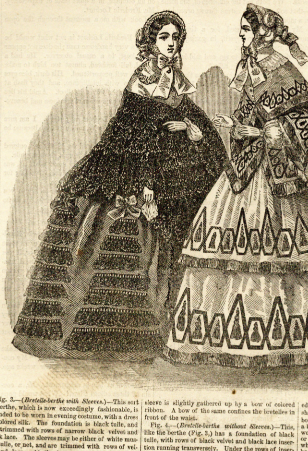


Fig. 3.—(*Bretelle-berthe with Sleeves.*)—This sort of berthe, which is now exceedingly fashionable, is intended to be worn in evening costume, with a dress of colored silk. The foundation is black tulle, and it is trimmed with rows of narrow black velvet and black lace. The sleeves may be either of white muslin, tulle, or net, and are trimmed with rows of velvet and lace. At the inner part of the arm the sleeve is slightly gathered up by a bow of colored ribbon. A bow of the same confines the bretelles in front of the waist.

Fig. 4.—(*Bretelle-berthe without Sleeves.*)—This, like the berthe (Fig. 3,) has a foundation of black tulle, with rows of black velvet and black lace insertion running transversely. Under the rows of insertion are runnings of colored ribbon. The berthe is edged with a full trimming of black lace. On the shoulders are small epaulettes formed of colored ribbon, cut in points, and from each point is suspended a black silk tassel. This berthe is suitable to be worn with an evening dress of colored silk, barege, or muslin. By a young lady, it may be worn with a white muslin dress, and the effect will be found to be very pretty if the berthe be trimmed with pink or blue ribbon.